

REVENANT CITY

written by

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Completed:
06/19/2025

Revised:
07/04/2025

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EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - PRE-DAWN

BLACK SCREEN.

A low, rhythmic knocking echoes—like something trapped below.

FADE IN:

AERIAL SHOT - ANCIENT CEMETERY - DAWN LIGHT Rows of cracked headstones swallowed by mist. A toppled marble angel lies face-down in weeds.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"In America, there are over one hundred and fifty thousand cemeteries. Two million acres of quiet ground. Enough to bury every man, woman, and child in New York... twice."

EXT. SUBURBAN CEMETERY - DAY

Long-forgotten graves overgrown with ivy. A rusted gate creaks in the wind.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"The dead here are worth eight billion dollars in land alone. Exempt from taxes. Untouched by commerce."

EXT. DESERTED FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

Glass doors smashed. Wind stirs faded memorial wreaths across cracked tile.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"But they remember. Or something does."

EXT. CITY CEMETERY - TWILIGHT

A fresh trench yawns open in the mud. No casket. Just emptiness.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"Every year, three and a half million bodies find their way underground. Some never rest. Some never forgive."

EXT. OVERGROWN MAUSOLEUM - PRE-DAWN

A handprint—too small, too fresh—smears the dust on a marble door.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY SKYLINE - DAWN

The silhouette of a ruined metropolis. Fires flicker in distant towers. A faint, rhythmic knocking echoes again—closer this time.

SMASH CUT TO TITLE:

REVENANT CITY

(The knocking continues as the screen goes black.)

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT - FLASHBACK MONTAGE

A cold wind rustles through skeletal trees. Fog rolls in sheets over uneven tombstones.

A distant RUMBLE of thunder echoes through a vast, fog-drenched cemetery. Gnarled trees sway in a restless wind. Rain begins to fall — soft, steady, surgical.

At the cemetery gates, three armored black trucks idle with a low mechanical growl. Bright halogen floodlights flare to life, washing the gravestones in sterile white light.

WIDE SHOT - Hundreds of tombstones stretching into darkness. Men in black hazmat suits fan out, stepping carefully over burial mounds.

A slow mechanical WHIR begins to rise as a crane unfolds itself. It lowers a metal claw into a pre-marked grave. A CHOKING SOUND as the soil is ripped open.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

CLOSE IN ON: A SET OF HANDS IN GLOVES PRYING OPEN A DAMP, WARPED COFFIN.

Inside: a woman's corpse. Rotted silk dress. Skin waxy. Jaw loose. Hollow sockets.

The technician silently nods to another. The body is tagged, wrapped in transparent polymer, and vacuum-sealed. The bag hisses as it's compressed.

They move in rhythm — practiced, indifferent. Around them, grave after grave is opened.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

"In an unprecedented move, the Department of Civil Regeneration has launched Operation Lazarus."

A drone whirs overhead, capturing every angle. Its lens scans a field of half-open caskets, plastic-wrapped corpses laid in neat rows beside metal transport pods.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"Backed by federal and private partnerships, Lazarus aims to convert our untapped human capital into revitalized productivity."

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

"Thousands of deceased citizens will be reanimated using federal biotech to resume productive lives in sanitation, agriculture, and non-combat military service."

CLOSE-UP: A DECOMPOSED FACE, NOW PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLEAR POLYMER. ITS EYE TWITCHES.

Suddenly — it BLINKS.

The technician doesn't see. He slams the pod door shut. Locks it.

Behind him, a different wrapped corpse subtly shifts inside its casing. A low, wet crack is heard — faint, almost imagined.

Thunder rumbles again. And then, we hear it:

A low groan.

Somewhere out in the rows.

The technicians pause. One turns slowly. Points a flashlight.

But there's nothing. Just fog, stone, and the beginning of something very wrong.

SMASH TO BLACK.

INT. FACILITY 91 - SURGICAL BAY - NIGHT

A towering gray facility. Deep underground. Security cameras track every hallway. Clean. Cold. Devoid of life.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK

A room of government officials watches through reinforced glass. Charts blink. Medical stats stream across walls.

INT. SURGICAL BAY

An antiseptic chamber. Stainless steel walls. Circular track lighting circles the ceiling, glowing cold blue.

A single cadaver lies on a gurney beneath a clear containment dome.

The body is pale, mid-stage decomposition. The chest is open, revealing a glistening artificial heart. Thin tubes snake out of its arms and skull.

Two MEDICAL DRONES hover. Beeping.

DR. WELLS (40s, precise, drained) stands beside the gurney, gloved hands trembling slightly.

DR. WELLS

(softly)

"Neural interface connected.
Preparing to initialize heartbeat."

She glances up at a mirrored dome above them — they're being watched.

TECHNICIAN (OS)

"Telemetry reading green. Proceed
when ready."

DR. WELLS

"Activating... now."

She presses a touchscreen.

A high-pitched WHINE fills the room. The artificial heart begins to THUMP. Once. Twice. Rhythmic. Machine-assisted breath fills the lungs.

The cadaver's fingers twitch.

DR. WELLS (CONT'D)

"Motor response. Behavioral sync...
80% and rising."

The body's eyes snap open. Pupils dilated, unfocused.

Black, glossy, but aware. It slowly turns its head. Focuses on the overhead dome.

DR. WELLS (UNDER HER BREATH) (CONT'D)

"It's looking at us."

TECHNICIAN (OS)

"Just residual muscle movement.
Ignore it."

The cadaver BLINKS.

Then — in one sudden, vicious movement — it SLAMS its hand through the restraint lock.

ALERT BUZZER

DR. WELLS

"SHUT IT DOWN!"

The creature LUNGES off the table and GRABS the nearby intern, biting into his neck. Arterial spray hits the glass.

SCREAMS echo from every corridor. Lights flash red. Security teams rush in — too late.

The cadaver thrashes violently, then hurls itself into the mirrored dome. **CRACK — SPIDERWEBS SPLINTER across the glass.**

From the observation deck: panic.

SECURITY COMMANDER (OS)

"Seal the bay. Lockdown in effect."

DR. WELLS stands frozen, covered in blood, her eyes locked on the creature as it snarls — and SMILES.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

MONTAGE — CITY DESCENT

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX — DAY

A mother locks her door with furniture, holding her toddler tight. Through the peephole, distant screams echo.

A THUMP.

CLOSE IN ON: THE HANDLE TURNS SLOWLY.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Looters push carts full of supplies. Someone shouts. A store clerk bites into a customer's neck. People scream and flee. A shopping cart rolls alone.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - NIGHT

Uniformed officers stare at bodycam footage: a zombified sanitation worker smashing through a riot shield.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - EVENING

An ice cream truck sits still in the road. Its jingle plays on a loop. Blood streaks the windshield.

INT. TV NEWS STUDIO - NIGHT

A breaking news report. An anchor hyperventilates, stammering into the camera.

TV ANCHOR

"We... we've lost contact with D.C.
There's... they're in the studio.
Oh God—"

A bloodied hand grabs his face as his zombified co-anchor lurches across the desk.

EXT. OVERPASS - NIGHT

Military convoys roll by. Helicopters flash searchlights into city blocks. Sirens, static, and distant gunfire merge into a relentless drone.

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

A press conference in progress. Power flickers. Soldiers close the doors. Screams inside. Muffled gunshots.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

A giant LED billboard flickers dimly over a shattered plaza. Graffiti crawls up the surrounding concrete walls.

A CROWD of civilians gathers — thin, exhausted, armed with bags and makeshift weapons. They're hemmed in by a **military barricade** made of Humvees, razor wire, and armored riot police.

LOUDSPEAKERS BLARE from mobile towers mounted on trucks.

COMMANDER'S VOICE (V.O.)

"This is Command Post Echo. By authority of Regional Stabilization Directive One-Four-Six, martial law is now in effect."

Behind the crowd, a few people try to leave. Riot troops move in fast — shields out, rifles raised.

COMMANDER'S VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"All noncompliant individuals will be detained. Curfew begins at sundown. All fuel, medicine, and weapons must be declared at checkpoint terminals."

A protestor throws a bottle. A tear gas round answers.

In the chaos, a small child is knocked down. A WOMAN screams. Troops shove forward. The crowd breaks — confusion, panic.

INT. MOBILE HQ - CONTINUOUS

Inside a dim control tent, a FEMA OFFICER watches drone feeds. Beside her, a POLICE CHIEF nurses a coffee and shakes his head.

POLICE CHIEF

"You think they're scared of us?"

FEMA OFFICER

"No. They're scared we've got nothing left to protect them with."

EXT. CITY SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

As the crowd disperses in smoke and riot flash, a **group of heavily armed citizens watches from a nearby rooftop**, silhouetted.

One of them lowers a pair of binoculars.

CITIZEN LEADER

"They'll remember this."

ANOTHER

"And so will we."

The rooftop fades into shadow as the **curfew sirens begin to wail.**

INT. DOWNTOWN REQUISITION CENTER - DAY

a former community gym. Inside, rows of frightened civilians wait behind mesh barricades. Armed NATIONAL GUARD troops patrol the aisles. A makeshift FEMA banner hangs, torn, above a supply booth.

A GUARD SERGEANT (40s, exhausted, voice cracking) yells above the storm of people:

SERGEANT

"One bag per household! Step back!
Step back!"

A WOMAN (30s, bruised, clutching a child) pushes forward.

WOMAN

"You skipped us yesterday!"

GUARD

"Then you know the rules. Next."

She clutches at the gate. Her child coughs. Another guard shoves her back.

WOMAN

"We waited all night!"

GUARD

"Move!"

The woman screams — and something SNAPS.

Suddenly — bottles fly. A **man with a crowbar** swings at a guard. A **firecracker explodes** at the feet of a line patrol.

RIOT ERUPTS.

A **mob of civilians surge** the barricades. A soldier fires a warning shot — too close. Someone drops. Screams fill the air.

CLOSE-UP: A survivor wearing a torn sanitation jacket lights a molotov with a FEMA pamphlet.

SANITATION WORKER

"No more lines. No more orders."

GLASS SHATTERS. FLAME BLOOMS.

INT. BACK WALL — CONTINUOUS

A group of TEENS pries open the emergency exit. Dozens stream out into the storm, clutching bags of stolen rations.

OVER RADIO (O.S.)

"All units—Zone Violet breached.
Repeat—civilian breach. All
fireteams collapse toward downtown
perimeter!"

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP — MOMENTS LATER

A lone NATIONAL GUARD HELICOPTER hovers in. Below, **the building is burning**. Flares rise like distress beacons — or revolution signals.

On a nearby wall: someone's spray-painted in blood-red:

"NO GODS. NO RAIDERS. NO MASTERS."

CUT OUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED SUBURB —

A *tranquil cul-de-sac* — overgrown lawns, boarded windows, faded toys in the street.

A SURVIVOR GROUP in a stripped-down van pulls up.

One climbs the roof of a nearby house with a flare gun. Another breaks into a garage. A third sprays a red "X" over three front doors.

They begin purging — room by room. Unarmed families are dragged out into the daylight. Screams. A single gunshot.

One raider sets a mattress ablaze and tosses it into a kitchen.

As smoke curls skyward, a child watches from a basement vent.

Silent. Wide-eyed. Not blinking.

EXT. CITY STREETS - MONTAGE CONTINUES

- A school bus crashes into a pharmacy.
- Civilians barricade a parking garage with vending machines.
- A priest kneels beside a dying man, reciting prayers as the man begins to twitch.

AERIAL SHOT - CITY GRID GOES DARK. One district at a time.

SENATOR PARKER (V.O.)

"They're not people. They're
assets. It's in the bill. Section
44-B. Read it."

EXT. SKYLINE - NIGHT

A single rooftop flares as a survivor lights a distress fire.
The flames reflect off broken glass and pools of blood.

EXT. NEWS BROADCAST TOWER - CONTINUOUS

A faint, garbled message plays on emergency frequency:
"This is Lazarus Control... we have
lost containment... I repeat--"

CRACKLE. STATIC. BLACKOUT.**EXT. DOWNTOWN - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY TO NIGHT**

- Police push back a mob outside a closed hospital. Shots fired. Blood hits glass doors.
- A reanimated construction worker slams a wrench into his foreman's skull.
- Emergency alerts flood phones. Sirens. Martial Law banners drop over city hall.
- Aerial shot: the city grid **goes dark** - block by block.

INT. JUNKYARD BUNKER - NIGHT

A rusted chain-link gate groans as it shuts behind THE LONE MAN. The outside world—screams, sirens, gunfire—is muffled as he seals the entrance.

A dim glow from salvaged bulbs powered by solar-fed batteries lights a narrow path through stacked scrap. Engine blocks, twisted rebar, tires.

He moves with precision, not panic. Knows every inch of this place.

INT. INNER WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

A patchwork lab built from scavenged tools and tech. A wall of monitors—grainy black-and-white feeds from cameras mounted across the city. Each labeled with duct tape: "WALTON STREET," "3RD HOSPITAL," "CATHEDRAL SOUTH," "RIVER LOT."

CLOSE-UP - A monitor shows a woman on a rooftop holding a flare. Two figures behind her, limping. She looks straight at the camera.

The Lone Man doesn't flinch. He notes the location. Switches to another feed.

ANGLE ON - a workbench covered in homemade weaponry. A reinforced pipe with a welded blade. Bear traps made of shears and brake pads. EMP grenades assembled from drone parts and lithium packs.

He welds in silence, sparks casting orange light over his scarred face. Every tool placed with ritualistic order.

MAP WALL - An old city map riddled with nails and thread lines. Sections marked in red X's. Others ringed in blue.

He pins a new photo: a grainy image of an Echo Class zombie standing over a Raider corpse—**watching, not feeding.**

Next to it, a worn polaroid. A woman and a young girl. Smiling. Taped beside a countdown written in grease pencil:
DAY 289

INT. SLEEP CHAMBER - LATER

A cot in the corner. A manual radio scanner buzzes quietly.

He lies down but does not sleep. Just listens.

SCANNER (DISTORTED)

"...containment breach... all sectors compromised... if anyone hears this—"

The message loops. He stares at the ceiling.

His finger taps on the cot frame. Rhythmically. Steady. A countdown... or a call.

MATCH CUT TO BLACK.

The glow of a single torch cuts through darkness. Sparks fly from a welding mask.

THE LONE MAN, mid-40s, scarred, focused — crafts a pressure-triggered bear trap. Metal clicks and hisses.

CLOSE-UP — His hand draws a red 'X' across a block on a city map marked **INFECTED**.

He wipes sweat from his brow. No expression. Only precision.

Around him: shelves lined with improvised weapons, makeshift electronics, salvage tech. Monitors flicker from solar-fed batteries.

One feed shows a mother and child hiding in a trash chute. Another: a man eaten alive in a stairwell.

The Lone Man watches. No reaction.

He flips a switch. Power goes dead. Silence again. Darkness surrounds.

INT. JUNKYARD BUNKER — NIGHT

Steam coils from a row of cracked vents. The *bunker's deepest chamber* groans open. Dust spills out.

THE LONE MAN stands before a tarp-covered **monster of a car**, his hand on the release chain.

He yanks it.

WHIP — SLAM. The tarp falls.

REVEAL:

A rust-bitten, exo-caged **1972 Plymouth Satellite/ Dart** — reborn as a hell-engineered war beast. Diamond plate doors, welded armor panels, and a spiked front end bristling with **rotating saw blades** mounted in a gutted snow blower frame.

The hood is gone — in its place, **eight straight-pipe exhaust stacks** hiss steam and flame.

- **Steel crash bars** armor the sides like a riot tank.
- **Dually rear wheels** wrapped in off-road rubber.
- **A-pillar searchlights** strobe test-cycles.

- **Rear strobe beacons** pulse red and white.
- **Roof escape hatch** bolted with slide-lever releases.
- Interior stripped to bone - harness belts, steel grate flooring, manual ignition rigged to a knife-switch.

He runs a hand along its hood, now stenciled with a faded word in white paint:

"SALVATION."

Behind him, monitors blink - **zombie herds moving, Raider chatter climbing.**

He mounts a pair of rusted motorcycle batteries into the firewall. The machine GROANS to life.

ENGINE (V.O.)

A metallic SNARL - like rage fed through a turbine.

He tightens gloves. The saw blades whirl up.

LONE MAN (to himself)

"Let's put the fear back where it belongs."

EXT. JUNKYARD GATE - MOMENTS LATER

The bunker gate BLASTS OPEN - **SALVATION** rockets out, plowing through rusted cars.

The Lone Man vanishes into the dawn, headed straight for hell.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. CATHEDRAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Torrential rain slaps broken pavement. The silhouette of **ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL** rises like a dark monolith at the edge of downtown. Cracked stained glass glows with lightning flashes.

Suddenly-

A SCREAM.

ZARA (late 20s, battle-scarred, determined) charges into view, soaked and bleeding, carrying a rusted fire axe. Behind her:

- **MARCUS (50s, stoic, once a preacher)** supports the limping **LENNY (20s, wiry, quiet)**, clutching a toolkit.

- **HORACE (60s, gruff, builder)** brings up the rear with a sledgehammer.
- **JAKE (30s, twitchy, erratic)** fumbles with a pistol.

Behind them, **ZOMBIES** pour from alleyways and broken buildings — running, snarling, crawling.

ZARA

"Get to the doors! MOVE!"

She slams into the ancient cathedral doors. They don't budge.

HORACE

"It's chained from inside!"

MARCUS drops Lenny and rushes forward. He slams his shoulder into the doors.

JAKE (PANICKED)

"They're gaining! They're GAINING!"

ZARA turns and **buries her axe in an Echo Class zombie's skull**. Another zombie dodges. Smarter.

LENNY (WEAK)

"Use the pipe—right hinge—!"

HORACE finds it. Slams the bolt with his hammer.

DOORS BURST OPEN.

The group tumbles inside. **Marcus slams them shut**. Horace welds a chain across the frame. Zara jams her axe handle into the door brackets.

INT. CATHEDRAL NAVE - CONTINUOUS

Flickering emergency lights reveal broken pews, shattered icons, stained glass half-boarded.

The group collapses in exhaustion. Thunder rattles the cathedral.

ZARA

(to Marcus)

"You said this place was safe."

MARCUS (BREATHING HARD)

"Safe is a prayer. Not a promise."

JAKE pulls a joint from his wet jacket and lights it with shaking hands.

JAKE

"Hell of a first sermon."

HORACE opens a storage door. Old tools. Candles. Wood planks. He nods.

HORACE

"We can work with this."

LENNY, already scanning the lighting cables.

LENNY

"If I can get the rooftop solar relays back online, we'll have more than candles."

ZARA walks to the altar. Kneels. Exhausted.

ZARA

"Tomorrow we reinforce. Tonight we breathe."

EXT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT - WIDE SHOT

The doors rattle behind them as zombies SCRATCH and GROWL just beyond the barricades.

INT. CATHEDRAL - LATER THAT NIGHT

The group huddles in the dimly lit nave. A small portable camp stove flickers. A pot of canned stew heats slowly.

ZARA crouches with a wet towel, cleaning her axe.

ZARA

"Smarter. Faster. That one ducked me."

HORACE, seated beside her, wraps gauze around his forearm.

HORACE

"Tools ain't the only things adapting. Those things are learning."

MARCUS places bowls of stew on salvaged pew planks.

MARCUS

"We thank the hands that made this food, and pray those hands find peace."

(beat)

"Even if they're out there now."

JAKE chuckles, slurping from his bowl.

JAKE

"Preacher's still got jokes."

LENNY, crouched beside a solar relay battery, tinkers with exposed wiring.

LENNY

"If this holds charge through the night, I can rig motion sensors. Maybe reroute juice to the bell tower."

ZARA watches him, impressed.

ZARA

"Not bad, tech rat."

He shrugs, but a faint smile breaks through.

MARCUS sits down beside Zara. The candlelight flickers in his tired eyes.

MARCUS

"You saved us. Again."

ZARA

"You keep calling it saving. I call it delaying the inevitable."

They all fall into silence.

EXT. CATHEDRAL ROOFTOP - SAME TIME

Rooftop crosses sway in the wind.

INT. CATHEDRAL - SLEEP SETUP - LATER

Makeshift bedding from old church cushions and scavenged blankets. Everyone finds space.

- Horace snores with his back to a pew.
- Jake uses his jacket as a pillow, his gun in hand.
- Lenny sleeps beside the battery unit, wires still coiled around his arm.

Zara sits awake at the back of the nave, staring up at broken stained glass.

MARCUS (O.S.)

"You sleep with one eye open too, huh?"

ZARA

"That's the trick. Sleep with both open. Dream with neither."

He smiles faintly, nods.

Outside, the scratching continues.

CLOSE ON: The candle flickers lower.

INT. CATHEDRAL CRYPT - NIGHT

MARCUS descends into the cathedral's crypts with an old oil lantern. Candles flicker along the stone walls – most melted to stubs. He kneels before a shattered shrine.

He gently pulls a **small wooden box** from beneath the altar and opens it – revealing several **dog tags**, a **crucifix**, and a torn Bible page marked: "*Matthew 24:13 - But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.*"

He stares at the verse.

MARCUS

(quietly)

"I stood firm. They still died."

He closes the box. Strikes a match. Lights one new candle.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

"One for today."

FADE OUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Faint flicker of a broken EXIT sign. Rats scurry across trash piles.

A **zombie**, once a *postal worker* (still wearing a decayed blue uniform), stands alone beneath a flickering security camera. It's not shambling – it's **still**, head tilted.

It slowly reaches into the torn satchel slung over its shoulder.

Pulls out a yellowed, crumpled **child's drawing**: stick figures labeled "DAD" and "ME" in purple crayon.

The zombie **stares** at it.

Its fingers tremble. One tear — involuntary or rain? — trails down its cheek.

A distant SCREAM echoes from the tunnels — the moment breaks. The zombie **growls**, crumples the paper, and lurches off into the dark.

CUT TO:

INT. LONE MAN'S BUNKER — SAME TIME

The moment plays on his monitor.

LONE MAN (SOFTLY)

"They remember."

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED OFFICE BUILDING — NIGHT

A dark, half-collapsed floor inside a former downtown high-rise. Dust chokes the air. Flickering EXIT signs. A water cooler leaks silently.

At the far end of a hallway: **three Echo-class zombies**.

They do not groan. Do not charge. They **stand**, still and alert — like soldiers waiting for orders.

One, once a teacher — her decayed cardigan pinned with a faded "Ms. Claire" badge — steps forward. She reaches a cracked drywall column.

KNOCK. KNOCK... KNOCK.

A pause.

Another Echo, this one a former paramedic, steps closer. Mimics the same knock... but alters the rhythm.

KNOCK. KNOCK.....KNOCK. KNOCK.

The third — a teenage boy in a torn varsity jacket — watches. Tilts his head.

He raises his hand to the wall. Hesitates.

Then — he **echoes** the second pattern, **perfectly**.

Silence. Then all three Echoes slowly turn toward the window. In the distance, through broken blinds:

St. Gideon's Cathedral.

They begin moving — not randomly — but together. **In formation.**

CUT TO:

INT. LONE MAN'S BUNKER - SAME TIME

The same moment plays on a monitor.

He scribbles notes beside a column labeled:

ECHO PATTERNS: "LANGUAGE?"

LONE MAN (MURMURING)

"They're not just learning... they're speaking."

BACK TO:

EXT. INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - PRE-DAWN

The streets are choked with debris. Scavenged husks of buses and delivery vans. Burned-out neon signs flicker like dying synapses.

A faint rumble.

Then—ROAR.

From a shadowed loading dock, SALVATION bursts forward, headlights off, with night vision engaged, its eight vertical exhaust stacks blasting flame across its rust-pitted hood. Diamond-plated armor catches the pre-dawn glow.

INT. LONE MAN POV - INSIDE CABIN

His gloved hand rests calmly on the rigged handle-bars like steering. HUD-style switches flicker faint green across exposed wiring. Gauges rise. His eyes lock ahead. Up ahead:

EXT. STREET - GROUND LEVEL

The herd appears — shamblers and Echo variants, drifting like haunted fog.

The front-mounted saws WHIR to life — roaring like demons waking.

A shuffling herd of a dozen zombies spills from an alley. They sense the engine's growl — but too late.

WHIRRRR.

Front-mounted snowblower rig spins, igniting with kinetic force.

THOOM — SPLATTER.

SALVATION plows through the herd. Bodies shred against spinning blades. Blood splashes across the armored windshield. Bones crack beneath reinforced tires.

Inside, Lone Man doesn't flinch. Reaches forward — toggles a switch.

Rear strobe lights activate. A rapid pulse. Behind him, dazed Echo zombies twitch — disoriented by the pattern.

SQUEAL — BRAKE TURN.

SALVATION fishtails, pivoting hard in the intersection. A FERAL ZOMBIE leaps toward the driver's side — slams into the steel crash bar, bones snapping on impact.

WHUMP.

SALVATION hits a flipped mail truck and launches briefly off the incline.

SLOW-MO MID-AIR SHOT — the machine silhouetted against burning rooftop sky. Flaming exhaust like hellfire wings.

CRASH-LANDING — tires hit, sparks scream.

Lone Man checks his side mirror. A group of Raiders on bikes peel around the corner behind him — laughing, high on carnage.

He doesn't swerve.

He throws the rig in reverse.

WHIRRRR — CRUNCH!

Saw blades catch one bike. Raider and machine explode in sparks.

The rest scatter.

LONE MAN
(grim, flat)
"Field test complete."

He guns it forward again – steam rising, engine snarling like it remembers every kill.

INT. CABIN - FINAL MOMENT

The Lone Man drives into smoke and flame, blood coating the armored glass. On his dash:

A photo of a little girl in pigtails. Behind it – a cracked Lazarus Tech insignia.

He reaches for another lever.

CLOSE-UP: ignition switch etched with one word – "RECKONING."

FADE OUT TO:

INT. DILAPIDATED APARTMENT - NIGHT

A candle flickers in a cracked teacup.

A WOMAN (30s) and MAN (40s) sit cross-legged in silence, eating from a dented can. Their clothes are threadbare. Blankets hang in the windows.

BOOM – CRACK.

The front door explodes inward.

Three ARMED SURVIVORS in scavenged armor burst in, faces hidden behind broken gas masks and welders' visors.

WOMAN

(terrified)

"We don't have anything!"

INTRUDER #1

"You have shelter. That's enough."

They drag the man aside. The woman pleads. One intruder grabs a bag of rice and kicks over a barrel stove. The candle falls. Flames catch quickly.

As the raiders leave, the man screams. Gunfire echoes. The camera lingers on a scorched child's drawing curling in flame:

A family of three under a blue sky.

INT. UNDERGROUND STATION PLATFORM - NIGHT

A flickering lantern lights a half-flooded train platform.

Water drips. Rats skitter.

A LONE SURVIVOR rifles through a rucksack – nervous. He hears something. Draws a rusty blade.

A second SURVIVOR steps out of the shadows – arms up, no threat.

Silent agreement passes between them.

But as the first survivor turns back – **a third shape lunges from behind.**

The knife clatters to the floor. Screaming. A flashlight spins across the concrete.

By the time the scene settles, the rucksack is gone.

The second survivor walks alone down the tunnel, now carrying both bags.

EXT. CITY BRIDGE – NIGHT

Thunder rolls across the crumbling skyline. Wind howls through a broken overpass, carrying with it the scent of rust, oil, and something far worse.

A rusted steel bridge spans across a broken riverbed. Firelight flickers from oil drums lining the barricades. The scent of fuel hangs thick in the air.

At the center stands Kael “BLACKMOUTH” MORDRIN (40s) – sinewy, half-mask respirator hanging from his neck, cloaked in layers of scavenged armor, chrome, leather, bones. His eyes: volcanic.

Behind him: RAIDER VEHICLES idle in battle lines – blackened muscle cars, reinforced pickups, spike-wheeled dune buggies, and a brutal matte-black armored van dubbed THE MAW. Tribal graffiti, bone trophies, and blinking LED kill counts cover their frames.

Raider gang assembled:

- COLE REDD (former military, shaved head, distant eyes) stands beside a sniper-modified SUV, arms crossed.

- RICO “LOOSE BOLT” VANCE flips a butterfly knife between fingers, pacing.

- TAZ “FUSE” DEWITT calibrates a drone laced with black powder.

- MALCOLM "ECHO" GRIGGS sharpens a machete, muttering to a helmet made of fused doll heads.

- DENNY "WHISTLE" LANG hums an off-key tune while loading incendiary rounds.

- LUX VEGA (tattooed from collarbone to eye) leans against a Harley next to FRANKIE "CHOMP" BELL, who chews on an old dog tag like gum.

In the distance, the city's glow pulses like a wounded heart.

KAEL

(raising his voice)

"This city was ours before the lights went out. And it'll be ours again. What we lost in order, we reclaim in blood."

RAIDERS, and RAIDER VEHICLES — customized cars, vans, and bikes — idle in tight formation. Reinforced grilles, spikes, blood-smeared windows. A gang of eight.

(banging weapons, shouting)

"BLOOD. FUEL. FIRE!"

KAEL (CONT'D)

(arms raised)

"Tonight we hunt, tomorrow we rule. The city forgot who owned the night. We remind them."

RAIDERS

(chanting)

"Chaos. Chaos. Chaos."

KAEL

"Fuel, flesh, and fire. Bring me all three."

Kael lights a flare and hurls it into the air. It bursts RED above the skyline.

COLE REDD looks away.

KAEL (CONT'D)

"You look tense, soldier. Missing the leash?"

COLE

"Just waiting for something worth killing."

KAEL

"Oh, it's coming."

KAEL (CONT'D)

"Whores in towers. Priests in ruins. All of 'em forgot the sound of terror. Let's remind them."

RICO

"East Wall's crawling with rats. Word is they took a church. Reinforced it."

COLE REDD watches the skyline, expression unreadable.

KAEL

"Cole. Say something prophetic."

COLE

"No gods here. Just prey and predators."

Kael grins.

KAEL

"Poetry. I like it."

LUX VEGA

(to Chomp, chuckling)

"You think the meat in the church'll scream louder than the ones at the high school?"

FRANKIE "CHOMP"

(grinning)

"Only one way to find out."

Engines roar. Explosions of fire crack behind the line. One of the bikes pops a wheelie as it launches off a makeshift ramp.

KAEL (TO HIMSELF, EYES NARROWED)

"This time... no survivors."

The war convoy tears off the bridge — a storm of noise, chrome, and madness barreling toward the city.

CAMERA PANS UP to a drone following their movement, blinking red.

OVERHEAD DRONE SHOT — A blinking surveillance drone pivots and follows them, quietly logging every move.

CUT BACK TO:

INT./EXT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

The world remains gray. Sunlight filters weakly through the shattered stained-glass windows of St. Gideon's Cathedral. The Survivors begin their work.

EXT. CATHEDRAL COURTYARD - DAY

ZARA directs the team. She stands on an overturned pew repurposed as a ladder, helping HORACE install a steel slab across the entrance.

ZARA

"More weight on the eastern wall.
That's where they pushed hardest
last night."

HORACE

(grunting)
"Steel frame's warped, but it'll
hold with bracing."

Nearby, LENNY uncoils copper wire, threading it from rooftop panels down through a gutted vent shaft. He taps a volt meter.

LENNY

"Panel output's low, but steady.
Enough to light the sanctuary and
maybe power the bell lift."

INT. CATHEDRAL - SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS arranges salvaged pews into a barricade around the altar. JAKE sits nearby, hammering nails through metal street signs into plank shields.

JAKE

(quietly to himself)
"If the devil lives anywhere... it's
in the house of the dead."

MARCUS

(overhearing)
"Then we make this house ours
before he notices."

JAKE smirks, shrugs, but keeps hammering.

CUT TO:

EXT. NARROW BACK ALLEY - LATE AFTERNOON

Slanting amber light cuts through a chasm of brick walls. Trash bins overflow. Rats skitter. The scent of oil and rot clings to the air.

A muffled voice — a **RAIDER SCOUT** — curses into a radio.

RAIDER SCOUT (V.O.)

"East perimeter quiet. No movement at the cathedral. Over."

Two more Raiders follow behind him, laughing — one sipping from a rusted hip flask, another twirling a pipe with spikes.

Then — silence.

THWIP!

A bolt strikes the lead Raider's throat. He crumples.

ARIA drops from a fire escape above, silent and surgical. Her blade flashes in the fading light. One Raider turns — too slow.

ARIA (WHISPERS)

"Too loud for ghosts."

VEX explodes from a dumpster behind the last Raider, driving a steel rod into his back. The Raider gurgles — collapses.

VEX

"Three down. One radio. Confirmed patrol route."

ARIA

"Cut the radio wire. Leave the rest."

She pauses. Behind an oil drum — a child, **no older than ten**, wide-eyed and shaking. Dirty face. Empty canteen.

ARIA (SOFTLY) (CONT'D)

"It's okay. We're not them."

The child doesn't speak. Just reaches toward her, hand trembling.

Vex gently lifts him up. Wraps him in a cloak.

VEX (TO ARIA)

"We burning the bodies?"

Aria nods.

ARIA

"Mercy comes with fire."

Vex pours alcohol onto the bodies. Aria lights a match, drops it.

The alley fills with warm orange flame. The child watches silently, eyes reflecting the inferno.

They disappear into the shadows – three figures against flame. Silent. Resolute.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP

ZARA climbs to the roof with broken binoculars. From above, the city looks fractured – streets littered with stalled vehicles, darkened skyscrapers like gravestones. She sees movement.

POV FROM ZARA'S BROKEN BINOCULARS:

Down the block, an **Echo Class zombie** slowly walks across an intersection. It doesn't lurch or charge – it stops at a shattered newsstand, leans down, and picks up a child's shoe.

ZARA

(softly, Looking THROUGH binoculars)
"...what the hell?"

POV FROM ZARA'S BROKEN BINOCULARS:

The Echo stares at the shoe, then drops it. Turns its head toward the church – but doesn't move. Doesn't growl. Just... watches.

EXT. SIDE YARD - MOMENTS LATER

HORACE hauls scavenged rebar into a pile. LENNY sparks a small welder, fusing rods into a gate.

HORACE

"You're good with your hands, kid.
This work... it matters."

LENNY

"I just don't want to die. But yeah. It feels... useful."

INT. CATHEDRAL - LATER

A long dining table cobbled together from pews. Cans, jerky, bread — meager rations shared.

HORACE

(chewing)

"Three days. Then we're gonna need a resupply run."

JAKE

"Yeah? You volunteering?"

ZARA

"Enough. This isn't the time for ego contests."

MARCUS

(smoothly)

"It never is. But pressure makes cracks. And it reveals grain."

LENNY enters, grease on his arms.

LENNY

"Bell tower's got power. Rigged an old phone to cycle the alarm if motion triggers. Basic defense net."

The group nods. Small relief. The candlelight flickers.

INT. CHURCH BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Zara wipes blood off tools. Jake paces. Marcus polishes a rusted silver cross. Lenny sketches wiring diagrams in the dust.

Tension rises. Whispers of distrust. Fear growing in silence.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Far down the block, a shadow moves — faster than before. Not lurching. Not howling. Just **observing**.

An Echo Class zombie crouches beside an abandoned cop car, watching the cathedral. Thinking.

FADE TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN RUINS - EARLY MORNING

MIST hovers above the cracked concrete. The sun hasn't broken fully through the haze.

ZARA, LENNY, JAKE, and HORACE move cautiously through a crumbling shopping district – dragging old grocery carts and hand trucks.

ZARA

"Keep your eyes up and the carts quiet. We don't know what's watching."

HORACE

(grumbling)
"Feels wrong being out in daylight. We are sitting ducks out here in the open, now."

JAKE

"Daylight's not what it used to be."

LENNY

(quietly)
"Neither are they."

INT. ABANDONED SUPERMARKET - MOMENTS LATER

Dust motes swirl through light beams cutting across the shattered roof. Shelves long stripped bare. Vines creep in through cracked skylights.

LENNY finds a crate of canned beans under a collapsed endcap.

JAKE rummages, eyes lighting up as he finds a half-case of whiskey bottles. He stuffs them in his backpack.

ZARA

"Stick to food and medicine. No one's drinking through this."

JAKE

(grinning)
"You say that like it's a bad idea."

HORACE steps carefully over a trail of broken mirrors laid deliberately in a curved arc.

HORACE

"Someone's been here. Recent."

Suddenly — a faint **click** beneath Jake's boot.

HORACE (CONT'D)

"Don't. Move."

He crouches, brushes away dirt: a **tripwire**, taut and laced through a shattered deodorant can rigged to a nail bomb.

ZARA

"Trap. Crude. Smart."

A strange, low **THUMP** echoes — not machinery. Footsteps?

Then: a high-pitched **SCREECH**. Followed by silence.

ZOMBIES BURST from behind the butcher counter and side freezer doors.

Not shambling — **charging**, some bounding on all fours like predators.

JAKE

"AMBUSH!"

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The survivors **BURST** from the supermarket's broken front. Groceries scatter. Zombies flood the street behind them.

ZARA

"To the alley!"

INT. NARROW ALLEYWAY

HORACE grabs a loose pipe and swings — **CRACK** — a zombie's head shatters against the brick wall.

LENNY jams a shock rod into another's side. It convulses but lunges again.

ZARA lights a flare and tosses it — briefly blinding the creatures as they slip through a service corridor.

EXT. DERELICT BUS DEPOT - CONTINUOUS

They crash into an old transit bus. Doors screech shut.

Zombies claw at the windows. Their eyes dart. They're not trying to break in – they're **waiting**.

INT. BUS - BREATHING HARD

JAKE

"This wasn't random. They lured us."

ZARA

"The trap. The mirrors. The scent trail. They planned it."

HORACE

"I don't like how quiet they've gotten."

LENNY peeks out. A zombie stands across the street – motionless. Watching.

CUT TO:

INT. LONE MAN'S BUNKER - SAME TIME

Surveillance feeds flicker. The LONE MAN watches a screen showing the supermarket's entrance.

He rewinds the footage. **FRAME BY FRAME** – sees an Echo Class zombie positioning a tripwire. Another dragging bones into a spiral.

He pulls out a grease-pencil and marks an updated pattern onto the city map.

LONE MAN

"They're not hunting. They're mapping us."

He circles the district with a red marker. Adds a new note beside it:

"ECHO INTEL LEVEL RISING."

He loads a shotgun, eyes narrowing.

LONE MAN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
"Time to change the pattern."

CUT BACK TO:

INT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

The cathedral doors slam shut.

The survivors stumble inside-bloodied, panting. **ZARA** latches the final bolt, her knuckles white. **JAKE** collapses onto the floor, breath ragged. **HORACE** immediately locks down the windows, checking every seal.

LENNY, bleeding from a shoulder scrape, dumps the half-filled hand truck near the altar.

ZARA
(checking the wound)
"It's shallow. You'll live."

HORACE
"But that trap was meant to
cripple. They're herding us now."

MARCUS enters from the back, having waited behind. He eyes them all silently, then helps Lenny sit.

MARCUS
"What did you see?"

ZARA
"Echoes. They waited. They baited.
And they didn't chase."

JAKE
(sarcastic)
"Yeah, they just watched like they
were judging our form."

ZARA
"Like they were learning."

INT. CATHEDRAL WAR ROOM - LATER

The group gathers around a crude map drawn across a communion table. **LENNY** adds new pins and wires from memory.

LENNY
"Mirrors. Tripwires. One had bones
arranged in a spiral.
(MORE)

LENNY (CONT'D)
Same spiral we saw last week near
the post office ruins."

HORACE
(grimly)
"That spiral again."

MARCUS
"They're marking something.
Claiming territory maybe."

ZARA
"Or sending a message."

JAKE
"Can we not act like they're
philosophers now?"

MARCUS
They're evolving. If we stay still,
we'll die in here."

ZARA
"We need more eyes. Someone
watching the watchers."

INT. CATHEDRAL BELL TOWER - NIGHT

LENNY tinkers with copper wiring around the cracked brass
bell. Below, the city is quiet. He flips a switch – the light
flickers to life.

Footsteps approach.

ZARA
"Thought you might like some air."

She hands him a can of peaches. He accepts it but doesn't
eat.

ZARA (CONT'D)
"You're quiet. Even when you're
screaming inside."

LENNY
(small chuckle)
"Tech doesn't argue with me.
People... not so much."

He finally opens the can. Eats.

ZARA
"Looks good on you."

LENNY

"Tools? Or survival?"

She smiles faintly. Then walks away. Lenny watches her go — clearly carrying unspoken feelings.

INT. CATHEDRAL ROOFTOP - NIGHT

ZARA climbs alone, scanning the skyline through cracked binoculars. In the distance, shapes flicker through alleys.

One figure stands still—an Echo Class zombie—half in shadow. It stares directly toward her. Motionless. Waiting.

She lowers the binoculars, breathing heavy.

FADE OUT.

- CITY COLLAPSE MONTAGE - NIGHT TO DAWN

EXT. DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Skyscrapers loom like gravestones. Smoke pours from a half-collapsed tower as flames lick its upper floors.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Rotting bodies fill the train cars. Rats feed in silence. A child's shoe floats in shallow, blood-mixed water. A broken screen loops evacuation orders — now just static.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - SERVICE CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Emergency lights flicker. Mannequins lie shattered along the floor. Somewhere deeper, a faint, continuous moan reverberates — inhuman, but *searching*.

A janitor zombie in uniform wanders, mop dragging behind it.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Columns vanish into darkness. The only sound: dripping water... and hurried FOOTSTEPS.

A survivor sprints past. A shape leaps from a support beam — too fast. Screams. Then silence.

EXT. CITY HALL PLAZA - SUNRISE

Blood pools around fallen riot shields. A tattered flag flutters atop a scorched dome.

A distant Echo-class zombie stands amidst the carnage, unmoving – watching.

INT. NEWSROOM - DAWN

Papers blow through a broken news studio. Cameras tilt randomly. The lights flicker back on for a moment, then die again.

On the anchor's desk: a child's drawing pinned to a map of martial law zones. A smiley face is crossed out.

FADE OUT TO:

EXT. EAST CITY BRIDGE - DUSK

The last light of day casts a blood-orange haze across the cracked concrete and rusted steel of East City Bridge.

A crowd of frightened CIVILIANS – about twenty strong – stands in a semicircle.

At their center: KAEI “BLACKMOUTH” MORDRIN, arms outstretched like a prophet of chaos. His armor gleams with fresh blood.

Before him: a LOCAL SCAVENGER (40s, dirt-caked, trembling), bound and gagged, forced to kneel.

Behind Kael: the RAIDERS in full formation. Vehicles idle, headlamps glowing like animal eyes. COLE REDD stands off to the side, arms folded, silent.

KAEI

(booming)

“There was a time when the word
tithe meant bread and coin. A fair
share for a higher power.”

(beat)

“Now, it's flesh. Fuel. Or both.”

He walks a slow circle around the scavenger.

KAEI (CONT'D)

“This man stole gas meant for the
Maw. Lied to our faces. Hoarded
while others bled.”

He draws a blade — long, blackened steel, engraved with runes.

KAEEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
"Mercy was the world that died.
We're the ones who survived it."

He SLITS THE SCAVENGER'S THROAT in one clean motion. Blood splashes onto the concrete.

The CIVILIANS recoil. Some cry. Others hold still — numb.

KAEEL wipes the blade clean on the dead man's shirt.

KAEEL (CONT'D)
"From now on — each district gives
their share. Food, fuel, medicine,
ammo. Or blood."

He turns to the civilians.

KAEEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
"Deliver the tithe by sundown.
Every three days. Or we come
collect."

(beat)

"Personally."

A pause.

KAEEL (SOFTLY, MENACING) (CONT'D)
"Am I understood?"

A few nod. One sobs.

He signals. RAIDERS FIRE GUNSHOTS into the air. The crowd scatters, panicked.

COLE REDD watches in silence, jaw clenched. He steps forward as Kael turns away.

COLE
(quiet, cold)
"They were already starving."

KAEEL
"So we teach them discipline."

COLE
"They'll turn on us."

Kael smiles — feral, unbothered.

KAEL
"They always do. That's when
they're honest."

Cole's hand tightens on the grip of his rifle.

COLE REDD clenches his fists. Doesn't look away.

KAEL (TO COLE) (CONT'D)
"You used to keep order. Still feel
like keeping the peace?"

COLE
"You call this peace?"

KAEL
"I call it balance."

Kael turns to the civilians.

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
"You want protection? You pay. You
want defiance? You bleed."

He walks away, cloak trailing through blood.

Kael strides back toward The Maw. Cole doesn't follow.

He stands at the edge of the bridge, watching the sun die
behind the city.

SMASH TO BLACK.

INT. LONE MAN'S BUNKER - NIGHT

The Lone Man stands before his wall-sized city map — layers
of transparent overlays, threads connecting blinking lights.

PUSH IN on the map: Raider movement patterns marked in red.
Zombie sightings in yellow. But one zone, the **old subway
tunnels**, is oddly clear. No sightings. No activity. Marked in
black.

The Lone Man narrows his eyes. Cross-references camera
footage. Feeds from street level and drone recon. Nothing.

He scribbles a note: "No Echo contact - Subsurface anomaly?"

CLOSE-UP - he tacks a photo onto the wall: an Echo Class
zombie seen walking around the tunnel entrance — and avoiding
it.

LONE MAN

"They're not afraid of much... but they're avoiding *that*."

He pulls out a worn subway map. Pins it beneath his current chart. Thread lines match up with recent Raider losses.

He draws a circle around a key junction beneath the cathedral.

LONE MAN (CONT'D)

"Something's down there... and it's calling."

GOVERNMENT ENFORCEMENT MONTAGE - NIGHT**INT. TEMPORARY COMMAND POST - FEDERAL ZONE - NIGHT**

A flickering LED map marks "SAFE SECTOR 4A." Soldiers watch drone feeds. A BRIGADIER GENERAL stands before a mic, sweat-stained uniform neat beneath body armor.

GENERAL (V.O.)

"By order of National Restoration Protocol 27, all civilians within Federal Territory must adhere to strict martial law. Curfew begins at 1800. Violation is punishable."

EXT. CITY CHECKPOINT - NIGHT

Humvee spotlights slice the dark. Armed POLICE in riot gear corral a line of haggard citizens. Drones scan barcodes tattooed on their forearms.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - MOVING

A pair of cops speed past a burning building. Screams echo nearby — but they ignore it.

RADIO (V.O.)

"Raiders active in Sector 7. Patrol reroute confirmed. Do not engage."

The officer clicks it off, jaw clenched.

EXT. FEDERAL RELIEF STATION - NIGHT

A banner reads: "FOOD AID - ID REQUIRED." Troops hand out ration boxes. Some civilians cry with relief. Others glare, silent. One whispers:

CIVILIAN

"Kael's not the only tyrant."

INT. ABANDONED SCHOOL - NIGHT

A FEDERAL POSTER: *"Your Sacrifice is Your Duty. Report Hoarders. Stay Useful."*

A family hides behind stacked desks. Through the cracked door, BOOTS STOMP past — but don't stop.

EXT. POLICE POSTER WALL - NIGHT

Flyers flap in the wind. Most are defaced. One reads: "MARTIAL LAW = CONTROL." Another: "WE REMEMBER WHO BURNED FIRST."

OVERLAY RADIO STATIC

"...Martial curfews remain in effect"

INT. FEDERAL ENFORCEMENT STAGING CENTER - NIGHT

Massive LED screens flash with curfew notices and martial law decrees. GOVERNMENT MILITIA — armored in black and crimson — move through lines of frightened civilians.

A COMMANDER (50s, sharp-eyed) addresses his unit.

COMMANDER

"Zone Delta through Gamma now fall under City Reclamation. Any Raider contact — withdraw. Civilian looters — detain. Curfew violators — zero tolerance."

INT. STREETS - SAME TIME

Civilians are herded away from burning vehicles. A crying teen is shoved to the ground, cuffed. One soldier hesitates — then complies.

A radio squawks: **"Avoid Raider territory. Orders from high command."**

EXT. ABANDONED RAILYARD - NIGHT

A different kind of campfire burns. A rusted metal drum glows red.

VANESSA QUINN (30s, ex-cop turned insurgent) addresses a ragtag group of ARMED SURVIVORS. Her voice is sharp, commanding – and full of grit.

VANESSA

“They push us around, steal what’s left, and call it protection.”

She slams a Raider skull helmet onto the fire. The group flinches.

VANESSA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

“No more. We hit their outposts. We bleed them dry. We fight with what they fear – unity.”

Murmurs of agreement. Someone nods. Another raises a crude banner – a burning city etched in charcoal.

SURVIVOR #2

“What about the Echoes?”

VANESSA

“They bleed too. Just slower. Let’s remind every monster what prey with teeth looks like.”

The group disperses into the shadows – a whisper of rebellion rising beneath a fractured skyline.

FADE OUT.

EXT. DERAILED TRAIN TUNNEL - NIGHT

A crumbling train tunnel choked with ash and fog. Faint amber emergency lights flicker.

ARIA and **VEX** stalk along the tunnel edge – rifles raised, sound suppressed. Their breathing is quiet, methodical.

Up ahead: three zombie silhouettes lurk near a pile of old debris.

But something’s off. The zombies... don’t attack.

ARIA

“They’re not moving.”

Vex kneels, checks the ground – a circle of white ash.

VEX

“They’re guarding something.”

Aria spots it – a half-buried panel in the wall. Old biotech wiring snakes out like veins.

ARIA (GRIM)
 “Old Lazarus tech. They remember it.”

Suddenly, the zombies snap toward them. No roar. Just movement – fast, coordinated.

Vex lights a flash grenade. Throws.

BOOM - FLASH

The tunnel goes white. Aria grabs the cable from the wall and rips it free. The zombies shriek – recoil.

ARIA (TO VEX) (CONT'D)
 “Grab the core. We bring this to Camila.”

CUT TO:

INT. CATHEDRAL LAB CORNER - NIGHT

CAMILA, bespectacled, brilliant, exhausted, stares at a digital display running data from the Lazarus cable core.

On her desk: rough sketches of zombie neural maps. She plays back **slow-motion video** of an Echo Class zombie pausing to sketch a spiral in the dust.

She rewinds. Plays again.

CAMILA (MUTTERING)
 “They remember. Not all of them. But some.”

She logs the note: “Echoes = mnemonic retention? Visual learning?”

One sketch on her board: the spiral. Another beside it: a human brain overlaid with fragmented patterns.

CAMILA (TO HERSELF) (CONT'D)
 “What are you becoming?”

INT. RAIDER FIELD TENT - NIGHT

Torchlight flickers inside a makeshift war tent fashioned from tattered banners and scavenged tarps.

KAE stands over a battlefield diorama made of ash, bullet casings, and twisted wire. The **Cathedral** sits at the center, marked with a jagged bone spike.

COLE REDD watches from a corner, arms folded. **RICO "LOOSE BOLT"** paces around the display, pointing with his blade.

RICO

"Take the bell tower first – blind them. Set the fuel drums at all exits."

KAE

"No. Let them see the fire coming. It's not just war—it's a sermon."

COLE

(gritting his teeth)
"They're civilians. Not soldiers."

KAE

"Then they'll burn quietly."

Kael smiles, lights a match, and drops it onto the Cathedral piece in the diorama. The flame licks upward.

KAE (CONT'D)

"Fuel. Flesh. Fire."

TAZ "FUSE" DEWITT enters, drone in hand.

TAZ

"Got footage from their scout patrol. Four survivors. One injured. No outside reinforcements."

Kael nods.

KAE

"Good. Then I'll give them a chance."

He raises a severed radio mic and clicks it.

KAE (INTO RADIO) (CONT'D)

"St. Gideon's. This is Kael Mordrin. You owe us tithe. Dawn, you surrender: food, fuel... or blood. Refuse, and we'll collect all three."

CUT TO:

INT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

The cathedral lies in low candlelight. Crickets chirp faintly outside – a rare moment of false peace.

INT. CHOIR LOFT - NIGHT

ZARA leans against the balcony, watching the others rest below. MARCUS climbs the narrow stairwell to join her, holding two cups of hot water.

MARCUS

"You've been up here all night."

ZARA

"Can't sleep when I don't trust the dark."

He hands her a cup. They stand in silence, watching shadows stretch across the floor.

MARCUS

"You trust them? The others?"

ZARA

"Enough to bleed beside them. Not enough to die for their mistakes."

MARCUS

"Leadership wears holes in the soul. You're still patching yours."

INT. CATHEDRAL SANCTUARY - SAME TIME

LENNY sits cross-legged with a toolkit spread out. Tinkers quietly. JAKE paces, checking ammo. HORACE stands in the back, watching the old stained-glass windows.

JAKE

"So what's the plan, huh? Wait around for another miracle?"

HORACE

"Don't need a miracle. Just need quiet."

LENNY

"We're sitting ducks. They mapped that last trap. That wasn't random."

HORACE

"You sound like Zara."

JAKE

"She's not wrong."

INT. SIDE HALL - SAME TIME

SCRATCHING. Faint, rhythmic. A whisper of claws against stone.

JAKE freezes, gun raised.

JAKE

(whispering)

"Someone check that door."

ZARA appears, rifle ready. They move slowly toward the chapel's west wing.

INT. WEST CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

A boarded-up stained glass pane. Beneath it, a hole chewed through the wood. Something has left **bone fragments** arranged on the floor.

ZARA

"Message or threat?"

MARCUS

"What's the difference anymore?"

ZARA

"Lock it down. Reinforce this wing tomorrow."

They back out, sealing the door.

EXT. CITY TOWER - NIGHT

ARIA and VEX crouch in a ruined office high-rise overlooking the cathedral.

ARIA

"They're not moving tonight. That's bad."

VEX

"Means they're planning. Or hunting smarter."

She raises a scope. Through it, she sees:
 - Echo zombies **circling**, but not attacking.
 - **Kael's Raiders** preparing a siege tower from scavenged steel.

ARIA

"Storm's coming. And it's got teeth."

VEX

"We warn them at dawn. Or we watch them fall."

CUT BACK TO:

INT. NAVE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Tension festers. The survivors sit around the map table. The air is thick with fear, sweat, and unspoken truths.

ZARA stares at the floor.

JAKE

"I say we run. Slip out through the crypts. Find another hole to die in."

HORACE

"They'll expect that. It's what they'd do."

MARCUS

"We hold. Or we scatter and die."

LENNY

(bitter)

"You talk like it's faith. But it's just stubbornness in a collar."

MARCUS

(slowly)

"I had a daughter. Echo got her in the first wave. I ran. Once."

He turns to the window — where the city smolders.

MARCUS (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

"I won't run again."

Silence.

ZARA

"Then we make them bleed."

EXT. CITY BRIDGE - PRE-DAWN

Low fog drifts across the rust-streaked span of the bridge. Raider banners flap in the morning wind — jagged fabric, bone charms clinking.

KAEL stands atop the Raider barricade — breathing deep, arms stretched like a preacher invoking judgment.

KAEL

"This is your dawn tithe! Food.
Fuel. Or flesh!"

A line of trembling **CIVILIANS** kneels before him — scavengers, elders, and a young couple with a child.

COLE REDD stands nearby, armored arms crossed. Jaw tight. He does not salute.

RAIDER DRUMMER pounds a rhythm — heartbeat-fast — as **RICO** and **CHOMP** drag forward a bound scavenger.

KAEL (TO CROWD) (CONT'D)

"He stole gas. And worse — stole
silence. Which of you will repent
with him?"

The crowd murmurs. No one moves.

Kael draws his machete — not for show. He kneels before the scavenger, strokes his face.

KAEL (SOFTLY) (CONT'D)

"All roads to peace are paved with
obedience."

Then—he executes the man in one clean motion. Blood sprays over the pavement.

Gasps. Whimpers. The child sobs.

COLE REDD twitches — almost steps forward — but forces himself to stillness.

KAEL (TO THE CROWD) (CONT'D)

"Tonight, your tithe doubles.
Remember what silence costs."

Kael turns, nods to Cole.

KAEL (CONT'D)

"Burn the body. Let the smoke teach
the city."

COLE

(quietly)

"That boy didn't steal anything."

KAEL

"Neither did the city. But it burns anyway."

Kael walks off.

Cole looks down at the child, whose blood-smeared face stares at him, unblinking.

He clenches his fists — just short of shaking.

INT. COLE'S CAMP TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Cole scrubs his hands clean in a rain barrel — furiously. His knuckles are raw. He stares at his reflection in the water. Then punches the barrel. Once. Twice.

A worn photo falls from his gear bag — a young boy, maybe 6, with crooked teeth and a METS baseball cap.

Cole picks it up. Sits. Silent.

Then, softly — to himself:

COLE

"No more children."

EXT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL PERIMETER - DAWN

WIDE SHOT — The gothic structure looms in the fog. Mist clings to the foundation. All is unnaturally still.

CLOSE ON: CHURCH BELL TOWER SENSOR

A motion sensor BLINKS red.

INT. CATHEDRAL - SANCTUARY

A high-pitched BEEP slices through the stillness. LENNY bolts awake, scrambling for his radio receiver.

LENNY

"Perimeter trigger — northeast wall."

INT. CHOIR LOFT - MOMENTS LATER

ZARA jerks upright. Rifle in hand before she's fully awake.
MARCUS is already pulling on his coat.

ZARA

"Let's move."

EXT. CATHEDRAL GROUNDS - MOMENTS LATER

The survivors fan out. Fog thicker now, distorting shadows.
Their flashlights sweep back and forth.

JAKE

(gripping pistol)

"This feels wrong."

A FIGURE stumbles into view — a scavenger. Civilian gear.
Bleeding from the mouth. One arm gone.

SCAVENGER

(barely audible)

"...they're coming... Raiders...
they took the bridge... they're
coming for the church..."

He collapses. HORACE checks his pulse.

HORACE

"Too late."

ZARA

"Everyone back inside. Now."

As they retreat—

RAIDER FLARE bursts overhead — red streak, then pop. A
signal.

FROM THE TREELINE — ENGINES growl.

EXT. CATHEDRAL WALL - CONTINUOUS

RAIDER SCOUT UNITS emerge — rough motorcycles and spiked dune
buggies. Spotlights sweep the facade.

Behind them: A **makeshift siege tower** mounted on The Maw,
their armored van.

RAIDER SPEAKER (AMPLIFIED)

"House of liars and ghosts! Kael offers your tithe: food, fuel... or blood."

The lights vanish. Silence.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CATHEDRAL - WAR ROOM - LATER

The survivors regroup. The scavenger's body is covered in cloth. ZARA spreads out a crude map showing possible breach points.

ZARA

"They've got a tower. Could reach the second-floor windows."

MARCUS

"If Kael's with them, they won't negotiate. They'll perform."

JAKE

"Perform?"

MARCUS

"Every siege has a stage."

HORACE

"I can rig a line of oil drums at the main gate. Trip-line ignition."

LENNY

"We still don't know how many."

ZARA

"Then we make sure they bleed finding out."

EXT. ROOFTOP - LATER

ARIA and VEX arrive under cover of fog. Zara meets them near the belfry.

ARIA

"They took the east tower. Executed a scavenger. Kids watched."

ZARA

"I know."

ARIA hands her a set of sniper photos. Kael in full armor.
Raiders torching a truck.

VEX

"They're showboating. Trying to
scare the city into surrender."

ZARA

"Then we don't give them the
audience."

They look out together — into the creeping light of dawn,
where the next move is unclear.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

SALVATION barrels down a burned freeway, swerving between
dead or wrecked civilian vehicles, overturned tankers and
crushed police cruisers.

ZOMBIES emerge from wreckage, sprinting — some Echo Class.
The saws scream. FLESH FLIES.

INT. SALVATION - CABIN

Lone Man checks his HUD. Blips — movement. Red markers
multiply.

EXT. OVERPASS - CONTINUOUS

RAIDER VEHICLES lie in wait. A trap.

BARRIERS SLAM DOWN behind SALVATION. Three heavily armed
trucks screech out of cover, surrounding him.

One Raider flings a molotov. Fire skims the windshield.

INT. SALVATION

Lone Man growls — flips a switch. Side ports eject **nail
charges**. EXPLOSIONS rip tires from the first truck.

He JERKS the wheel — rear bumper tears into another vehicle.

The remaining Raiders regroup, but suddenly — far off — MORE
ENGINES APPROACH.

A RAIDER REINFORCEMENT CONVOY.

Their vehicles are bulkier – with mounted turrets, armored cowcatchers, and screaming banshee horns blaring over loudspeakers.

The sky darkens as smoke grenades burst behind them.

LONE MAN

"Too many."

He slams a hydraulic lever – SALVATION LAUNCHES off an embankment, disappearing into smoke.

Behind, the Raiders SCREAM, some giving chase, others regrouping. One raises a flare pistol – the signal to hunt.

FADE OUT.

INT. STORM DRAIN - NIGHT

A squad of Ferals feast on a dead dog. One suddenly turns rabid and bites another.

It fights back – and within moments, **a dozen zombies** are locked in a **feeding frenzy... on each other.**

From above, **ARIA and VEX** observe silently.

VEX

"What the hell's wrong with them?"

ARIA

"They're starving... or purging."

EXT. DERELICT SUBWAY PLATFORM - NIGHT

Flickering tunnel lights cast erratic shadows across a flooded subway platform. The sound of dripping water echoes like slow applause.

A group of **standard zombies** shambles into view, following the scent of something unseen.

Suddenly – a **low-frequency pulse** hums from deeper in the tunnel. The zombies freeze, twitching.

From the darkness, a **single Echo-class zombie** emerges – head tilted, arms relaxed at its sides.

It lets out a series of **clicks**, rhythmic, deliberate.

The horde reacts – half collapse into seizures. The rest panic and turn on each other, **tearing limbs** in confusion.

The Echo walks calmly through the carnage, never touched.

ANGLE ON: A rusted Lazarus control panel embedded in the wall
— its indicator light blinks **green**.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. MIDTOWN POLICE BLOCKADE - NIGHT

Emergency vehicles sit abandoned, lights still faintly flickering.

Two FORMER COPS in riot gear — DETECTIVE RILEY (50s, stoic) and OFFICER MUNOZ (30s, shaken) — crouch behind a sandbag barrier surrounded by bodies and blood.

MUNOZ

"We shouldn't have stayed this long. Precinct's gone. So's downtown."

RILEY

"We were the wall. And until we're buried, the wall stands."

MUNOZ loads a flare.

MUNOZ

"No one's answering this anymore.
Not even Command."

He fires the flare anyway. Red sparks trail out.

RILEY

"Then we hold this corner. Because someone might still be watching."

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

A family of three survivors huddles inside an old sedan parked on the second level of a crumbling garage.

The YOUNG BOY coughs. The MOTHER strokes his hair. The FATHER loads a homemade bolt gun.

Outside the car: silence.

Then—

THUMP. THUMP.

Shadows slither along the far wall. A THIN ZOMBIE crawls across the ceiling, then drops down.

The father fires. MISSES. The zombie lunges.

CUT TO BLACK.

SFX: MUFFLED SCREAMS echo from inside the car.

INT. CATHEDRAL WAR ROOM - SAME NIGHT

Back at St. Gideon's. ZARA watches the street map intently. LENNY updates the trigger network.

ZARA

"We're not just up against Kael.
The city's breaking in ten places
at once."

LENNY

"And no cavalry's coming."

ZARA

"Then we be the cavalry."

She marks a new symbol beside the east bridge: a red skull.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Wind moans through shattered glass. The building groans with age and neglect. Medical posters hang in tatters. Blood-blackened tiles stretch under flickering ceiling lights.

ARIA, VEX, and CAMILA sweep through the trauma ward, weapons drawn. Aria holds a fire axe. Vex checks corners with a suppressed rifle. Camila carries a satchel of bio-sample tools and a homemade sensor pulsing faint green.

CAMILA

(quiet)
"Signal's stronger here. Something...
old."

They pass an overturned gurney, crusted with dried blood. A rusted wheelchair creaks as it rolls gently from the wind.

ARIA

(tense)
"Eyes sharp. This place went quiet
too long ago."

Suddenly—

SCREECH!

A **FAST ZOMBIE** bursts through a hanging privacy curtain, sprinting low and feral.

Aria reacts instantly—**WHAM!**—her axe splits the creature's skull with a wet crunch. It twitches. Dies.

VEX

"Contact—right flank!"

TWO MORE FAST ZOMBIES appear, flanking from opposite hallways.

Vex aims. The first charges. He fires—**pop! pop!**—clean headshot. It drops.

The second one stops short.

Breathing. Watching.

Its chest heaves. Eyes track Vex.

ARIA

(firm)

"Take it down—now!"

Vex raises his rifle—but **hesitates**.

The zombie tilts its head. Studying him. Its fingers twitch at its side, mimicking the grip of a weapon.

CAMILA

(whispers)

"They remember."

The zombie finally lunges—

Aria intercepts—**SMASH!**—kicking it through a shattered window into an operating room below.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

(shaken)

"That hesitation—did you see it? It was *measuring* him."

ARIA

(gruff)

"Don't give them a chance to act human."

She turns to Vex, who lowers his rifle, shaken.

ARIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

"You freeze like that again, you won't get another warning."

Vex nods—ashamed, but processing.

POV:

CAMILA kneels over the downed zombie Aria killed. She uses tongs to extract part of its cracked skull and slips a dark gel-coated chip into a pouch.

CAMILA

"This one had Lazarus hardware. Look—brain stem implants partially fused."

Aria leans over. The wound is still twitching.

ARIA

"Just like the ones in the subway."

CAMILA

"Some of them are remembering how to hunt. Not just act on impulse... but strategize."

Suddenly, the lights flicker above them—once. Twice. Then stay dark.

A low, distant moan echoes from below.

VEX

"Basement."

ARIA

"Trap or a lead?"

CAMILA

"Both."

They exchange a look. Then descend the stairwell into darkness.

INT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - PRE-DAWN

The first light of morning bleeds through high, cracked stained glass. Fog presses thick against every window. Inside, the survivors move with silent purpose — gearing up.

INT. CATHEDRAL ARMORY - CONTINUOUS

HORACE sharpens a machete with slow, deliberate strokes. He glances over at LENNY, who's disassembling an old drone.

HORACE

"You're not taking that thing out again, are you?"

LENNY

"It's not a toy this time. If it works, it'll track heat signatures — give us warning before they hit."

HORACE

(gruff but approving)

"Just don't let it buzz us into a grave."

INT. CATHEDRAL LOOKOUT POST - MOMENTS LATER

ZARA crouches by the rooftop slit. Binoculars to her eyes.

MOVEMENT.

A Raider scout — barely visible — slinks between parked wreckage. Beyond them, a siege team is slowly constructing a battering platform.

ZARA

(into radio)

"They're building something. Looks like... a ramp."

ARIA (V.O.)

(from rooftop across street)

"It's not for breaking in. It's for delivering something *big*."

ZARA

"Then we collapse it before it gets here."

EXT. ABANDONED INTERSECTION - NIGHT

A stray **Ferals-class zombie** wanders, limbs twitching erratically.

Across the intersection: three **Echo-class** zombies stand unnaturally still.

The Feral hisses and lunges – primitive, starving.

But the Echoes don't flinch. One steps forward and **decapitates** the Feral with cold precision.

The others drag the body into the shadows.

A nearby camera blinks.

CUT TO:

INT. LONE MAN'S BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

The footage plays. The Lone Man leans forward, whispering:

LONE MAN
"They're cleaning house."

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. COLLAPSED HIGH SCHOOL - SUNSET

In the gymnasium, zombified teens shuffle mindlessly – until a loud SCREECH draws their attention.

A **zombie in firefighter gear**, eyes glowing faintly – clearly more evolved – crashes through the ceiling.

It **brutally slaughters** the slower zombies in choreographed fury.

Nearby, an Echo zombie watches – almost judging – then turns and disappears into the bleachers.

INT. FORMER PRECINCT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Detective RILEY watches old surveillance footage. On the grainy screen, a group of ECHO ZOMBIES circle an overturned police cruiser... but don't attack. One of them, disturbingly calm, studies the siren light. Fingers twitch. It mimics the flashing rhythm.

RILEY (V.O.)
"They're not just learning. They're listening."

BACK TO:

EXT. CATHEDRAL GROUNDS - SUNRISE

Crows scatter from a crumbled chapel wall as Zara and Horace approach the eastern barricade.

HORACE

"Fuel cells wired to the trip pins.
All we need is a spark."

ZARA

"Then we give them one hell of a
sunrise."

She hands him a flare launcher.

Suddenly – a faint, eerie HUM. Not engines.

They freeze.

From the mist: a **Raider drone** swoops overhead, scanning.

ZARA (CONT'D)

"Down! It's got audio pickup!"

They duck behind cover.

INT. CATHEDRAL WAR ROOM - LATER

LENNY rewinds a video feed. The drone. The heat map. But there's more.

He switches feeds to show a **cluster of Echo zombies** just standing in the north plaza – perfectly still. Eyes raised. As if... waiting for something.

LENNY

"They're not attacking. They're in
position."

ZARA

"For what?"

LENNY

(stares at the blinking
signals)

"For *someone*."

EXT. ST. GIDEON'S COURTYARD - LATER

MARCUS steps outside and finds a small tube embedded in the church gate. Inside: a rolled blueprint.

ZARA (READING IT)
 "Defense schematic. Bell relay wiring. Tunnel triggers."

HORACE
 "Who the hell drew this?"

MARCUS
 (reverent)
 "Divine providence."

ZARA doesn't reply. Just looks up toward the northern rooftops.

ZARA
 "No. He's watching us. Helping."

She walks away.

INT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - TACTICAL BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

The candlelit war room is filled with urgency. Rain drums lightly on stained-glass panes. The survivors are gathered around a blueprint — the *Lone Man's diagram* — spread across the communion table.

ZARA
 (pointing to the northwest quadrant)
 "They'll test the perimeter here first — two access alleys, low coverage. But if we plant trip charges beneath the side rubble—"

HORACE
 "They lose their footing. Good. Could scatter their front wave."

ARIA
 "Assuming Kael doesn't send in Echo scouts first. Those things don't trip wires. They *step* over them now."

LENNY
 "I've got the uplink half-rigged. If the drone net syncs, we can ping movement through thermal echoes. It's not perfect, but—"

ZARA
 "It's more than we had yesterday."

MARCUS

(somber)

"And still not enough."

A silence falls.

ZARA

(quietly)

"Nothing's ever enough. That's why we hold anyway."

Beat.

HORACE

"Alright. Let's get to work."

CUT TO:

INT. CRYPT ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A narrow stairwell leads into the crypts beneath. Zara lights a flare and leads Marcus down. The space is damp, but structurally sound.

ZARA

"We can clear this out. Dig tunnels, maybe. Storage, fallback point."

MARCUS

(eyeing old coffins)

"Sanctuary below the sanctuary. Irony's thick."

INT. CATHEDRAL CRYPT ACCESS - EARLY MORNING

Dim lantern light flickers against the stone as the survivors descend the narrow staircase into the crypt below. Moisture beads on the walls. Roots twist through cracks in the ceiling.

ZARA

(quietly)

"Keep your voices down. Sound travels down here."

MARCUS

"This place was built for prayer... not war."

HORACE

(grumbling)

"Then it's about to be remodeled."

They reach the bottom — a narrow chamber. Dust chokes the air. Broken caskets, old clergy remains, rusted iron gate separating further catacombs.

LENNY

"I can set up charges here. If they breach upstairs... we drop this section behind us."

JAKE

"And what? Trap ourselves with corpses and rats?"

ZARA

"Only if we have no choice."

She kneels near a wall etched with Latin scripture — part crumbling.

ZARA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

(to Marcus)

"These tunnels connect to the old subway. Right?"

MARCUS

"Only in rumor. But if there's a path — it'd run beneath the graveyard."

JAKE

"Perfect. Zombies upstairs, ghosts downstairs."

LENNY

(gesturing to a faint draft)

"There's airflow. Something's open below."

Zara touches the floor — faint tremor.

ZARA

"They're moving. Kael's not wasting time."

EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

ARIA and her Hunter team set charges along the upper levels of a crumbling parking garage.

ARIA

"Wait for the lead van. Then drop it."

Below, a RAIDER CONVOY passes — three vehicles.

ARIA (CONT'D)

"...Now."

The structure BUCKLES — CRASH. Dust, rebar, screaming tires.

Chaos. Hunters ambush — crossfire erupts.

In the smoke, ARIA sights COLE REDD.

He aims.

So does she.

But — he lowers his weapon.

ARIA hesitates.

He nods once — regret in his eyes.

She vanishes into the smoke.

FADE OUT TO:

INT. CATHEDRAL SANCTUARY — CONTINUOUS

The survivors reinforce barricades. Aria returns from the smoke — bruised, limping. Zara greets her.

ZARA

"You made it."

ARIA

"Ran into Redd. He let me go."

ZARA

"Then he's not lost yet."

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE SAFEHOUSE — SAME TIME

Inside a makeshift safehouse marked "PCT 9," a few scattered survivors — ex-cops and civilians — huddle around radios and weapon caches.

RILEY (mid-40s, grizzled) patches a bandaged wound on his side.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

"...repeat, Raider flare confirmed near East Cathedral quadrant. Multiple heat spikes."

ROOKIE OFFICER

"We should warn them. That church has people in it."

RILEY

"They already know. They're waiting for the hammer to fall."

He peers out a shattered window — Echo zombies stalk the far alley, sniffing, circling, but never crossing the threshold.

RILEY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

(to himself)

"You see it too, don't you? You're herding us."

BACK TO:

INT. CATHEDRAL CRYPT - CONTINUOUS

The survivors uncover an iron gate — chained shut for decades. Zara smashes the lock.

ZARA

"Marcus, light it."

Marcus strikes a match. Flame dances on the damp stone.

They step through into a long-forgotten tunnel — its walls fused with scorched rebar, old Lazarus infrastructure jutting from broken tiles.

LENNY

(quiet awe)

"This isn't just crypts. This was part of the old Sector 6 labs... before the collapse."

Suddenly — a distant **SCREECH** echoes from deep within the tunnel. Something not entirely human.

Everyone freezes.

JAKE

"That's not a rat."

ZARA

"No. That's something waking up."

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. HIGHWAY RUINS - NIGHT

A blood-orange sky looms above as ZARA, LENNY, and JAKE crouch beside a burned-out commuter van.

Ahead: a stalled **Raider fuel transport** idles near a makeshift barricade of crushed sedans.

ZARA

(whispers)

"That's our shot. One driver.
Minimal escort. We take the truck,
we make it back."

They move — fast, brutal.

INT. RAIDER FUEL TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

LENNY hotwires the ignition as ZARA takes the wheel. JAKE climbs onto the roof, using a grappling line to loop over and toss a molotov behind them.

EXPLOSION — A Raider bike flips, screams lost in fire.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A high-speed chase unfolds. Raiders give pursuit on bikes and in jerry-rigged muscle trucks. Sparks fly. One swings a tire-ripper chain.

JAKE is hit by shrapnel — blood sprays from his arm. He grips the roof hatch.

JAKE

(grimacing)

"Don't stop... just drive!"

ZARA

"Hold on!"

They veer off the highway, smashing through a construction barricade into an **alley bottleneck**.

LENNY

"I got the route. Alley drops into
east lot!"

The truck SLAMS through a shipping gate. Raiders crash behind them — some don't make the turn.

INT. TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

JAKE collapses in the cabin, clutching the shredded stump of his arm.

ZARA

"No time to bleed. Stay awake."

They vanish into the smoke, the Raider screams distant.

INT. MAKESHIFT INFIRMARY - BACK ROOM, ST. GIDEON'S - NIGHT

JAKE lies on a salvaged operating table, sweat-drenched and pale. His left arm is heavily bandaged — soaked through. ZARA crouches beside him, holding his ungloved hand steady.

Nearby, **LENNY** works with trembling focus, applying pressure with gauze, improvising with parts from a medical drone.

JAKE

(weakly smirking)

"Guess I'm not ambidextrous anymore."

ZARA

"Shut up, idiot. You're lucky it wasn't your neck."

JAKE grimaces in pain. The joke was armor.

LENNY

"If I can rig that stabilizer splint, we might save the elbow joint. No promises."

He tightens a clamp. Jake bites down on a rag.

JAKE

(tensing, through teeth)

"Still better than Raiders playing doctor..."

ZARA catches Lenny's eye. The boy looks shaken. Blood under his nails. Tears held back.

ZARA

"You did good, Lenny. He's breathing."

Lenny nods once. Just once. Then returns to work.

INT. CATHEDRAL HALLWAY - LATER

ZARA and MARCUS walk in silence. Candlelight flickers as distant moans echo beyond boarded windows.

MARCUS

"Jake's spirit won't break easy."

ZARA

"But his body's a step ahead of him. We can't keep bleeding like this."

MARCUS

"No war is clean. And no one survives it unchanged."

Zara doesn't answer. She looks out through a sliver in the barricade — the fog swallowing the skyline.

INT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

The sanctuary flickers with weak lantern light.

JAKE sits on a pew, his shirt blood-soaked and arm wrapped in a crude splint. His rifle leans beside him, untouched.

Nearby, LENNY quietly rewires a broken comm radio, occasionally glancing over.

ZARA watches from the shadows — weighing the cost of every choice.

MARCUS enters, wiping grime from his hands, catching Zara's expression.

MARCUS

"Say it."

ZARA

"We've lost too much ground. They're bleeding us out... and the group's looking at me like I have the answer."

MARCUS

"You've led us this far."

ZARA

"That's not the same as saving us."

Silence.

ZARA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

"I saw a kid today. In the wreckage. Dead... but his eyes were open. Watching. Just watching."

MARCUS bows his head.

Across the room, **JAKE stares at his bandaged arm**, fingers twitching.

JAKE

"I always figured I'd die pulling a trigger. Not because I couldn't tie my boots anymore."

LENNY

"You're still alive."

JAKE

"Yeah? For what?"

He looks away, ashamed of the tremble in his voice.

Suddenly — a low, rhythmic **KNOCKING**. Echoing faintly from the crypt stairs below.

The group stills.

ZARA

"...that's not wind."

MARCUS

"Same pattern as the last time. Three short. One long."

JAKE

"They're talking to each other?"

ZARA

"No. They're warning us."

Off their looks, ZARA tightens her grip on her blade.

ZARA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

"Double shifts tonight. No one alone. If they're knocking, they're remembering."

CUT TO:

INT. CATHEDRAL TOWER - MOMENTS LATER

CAMILA stands alone near a shattered stained-glass arch. Eyes closed.

CAMILA (WHISPER)

"They're not just remembering who they were...
They're remembering what they lost."

She opens her eyes. In the reflection: the faint silhouette of an Echo zombie watching from the far rooftop across the street — unmoving.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CATHEDRAL WAR ROOM - LATER THAT MORNING

The crude map of the city lies sprawled across the communion table. Zara, Marcus, Horace, and Lenny huddle over it. Fog filters through cracks in the stained glass above.

ZARA

"He gave us a way out. And a way to fight back."

HORACE

(gesturing)
"If we reroute the relays through the bell tower and patch the western flank, we could stall them. Maybe hours."

LENNY

"That buys us time. But not safety."

MARCUS

"It buys us a miracle. We'll take it."

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED POLICE PRECINCT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Detective Riley walks the silent, hollow shell of his former precinct. Evidence lockers pried open. Cracked mugs. Blood on the tile.

He enters INTERROGATION ROOM #2. Surveillance feed flickers — recorded days earlier.

ON SCREEN: an Echo zombie in a cell. Still. Watching.

Then — it begins tapping the mirrored glass in sequence.

RILEY (V.O.)

"They watched us for years. Now
we're the suspects."

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A group of unrelated SURVIVORS — teens, an old woman, two injured men — walk through an empty market strip.

Suddenly — SCREAMS. Echo zombies pour out of sewer grates and shattered windows.

The survivors scatter.

An ELDERLY WOMAN falls.

A zombie stops. Looks down at her.

And slowly backs away.

YOUNG SURVIVOR (O.S.)

(whispers)

"It... it knew she was dying. It
didn't waste the bite."

INT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - RUINED MOTEL - SAME NIGHT

COLE REDD sits alone on a rooftop overlooking the flickering glow of the cathedral far in the distance. He watches it like a lighthouse in a black sea.

Behind him, a Raider approaches — but Cole doesn't turn.

RAIDER

Kael wants you on the north gate.
Now.

COLE

Tell Kael I'll be there when I'm
ready.

RAIDER

You're already late.

COLE stands. Picks up a battered canteen. Hands it to the Raider.

COLE

Then deliver this. It's Kael's
ration. Tell him I'm fasting
tonight.

The Raider hesitates, then backs off.

Cole returns his gaze to the distant cathedral. In his hand —
the photo of the boy again.

COLE (CONT'D)

(softly, to himself)

"Burn the old orders. Bury the new
ones."

INT. ABANDONED AUTO FACTORY - NIGHT

Towering rusted beams loom overhead. Shafts of moonlight
spill through shattered skylights, illuminating a maze of
conveyor belts and collapsed assembly lines.

ARIA leads a three-person **Hunter team**, flashlights cutting
through the dust.

ARIA

(whispers)

"Power cells should be on the upper
mezzanine. Stay sharp. No echoes
since entry."

Footsteps echo. The space feels too still.

Above them — unseen in the shadows — **dark, twitching
silhouettes** perch on rafters. **BLACK SKINS:** Echo variants,
crouched like gargoyles.

A faint *clink*.

Then darkness.

ALL LIGHTS CUT OUT.**ARIA (CONT'D)**

"DOWN! Night vision ON!"

The Hunters dive as shapes DROP from above — grotesque forms
howling mid-fall.

ZOMBIES — leaner, faster — descend like wolves. Metal
screeches. Screams tear the silence.

One Hunter is instantly pinned — his gun clatters away as
he's dragged across the floor.

ARIA fires upward — muzzle flashes strobe across the horror: jagged limbs, exposed wire sinew, teeth gnashing.

She grabs a pipe wrench, swings hard. CRACK.

Then — she's tackled from behind — slammed onto a conveyor line. It starts moving. Belts grind. Sparks rain.

INT. CONVEYOR BELT SHAFT - MOMENTS LATER

ARIA struggles beneath a snarling zombie. Her elbow slams a side panel — it sparks.

The conveyor accelerates toward a grinding pit of rusted gears.

A hand yanks her free — just in time.

REVEAL: THE LONE MAN. Masked, blood-smeared. He pulls her down an auxiliary tunnel.

Behind them, the machinery groans — and a Hunter screams one final time.

ARIA

(panting)

"Ben's gone."

LONE MAN

"Then don't let it be for nothing."

He tosses her a fresh mag. The tunnel behind flares with electric sparks as Echoes chase in unnatural silence.

Lone Man, dispatches two zombies heading towards them with, silent brutality.

ARIA

"You don't have to be alone."

LONE MAN

"I do."

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. SEWER RUNOFF CHANNEL - NIGHT

The *Lone Man* crawls along a wet, mossy pipe, just beneath the cathedral's western wall. He sets a motion-triggered relay node and wires it to a solar battery.

He glances up – and sees a rat's carcass lying untouched beside a bloodstained drainage grate.

He scans the area with a UV light – glowing prints leading into the dark.

LONE MAN

(softly)

"Something's already here."

He activates the node. A red light blinks once, then turns blue. It's live.

He disappears back into the shadows.

INT. CATHEDRAL SIDE CHAMBER - NIGHT

Rain hisses against the stained-glass. Thunder rolls above. The candlelight flickers.

JAKE sits alone on a bench, shoulder bandaged, hand trembling. Sweat beads on his brow as he pulls a **small metal tin** from under a broken floor tile.

Inside: three dull **painkillers** and a **burner comm unit**.

He flips the comm on.

JAKE

(softly, hesitant)

"...Whistle? You said the deal was still good."

CRACKLE. Then, a familiar, unhinged voice answers:

WHISTLE (V.O.)

"Aw, look who came crawling back. Told ya it'd hurt. One dose for info, just like before."

JAKE swallows hard.

JAKE

"There's a patrol shift gap at 0200. South alley blind spot. Two, maybe three of us on lookout."

Silence. Then—

WHISTLE (V.O.)

"Noted. Now be a good cripple and chew your candy."

Jake pockets the pills. Hangs his head.

Then—FOOTSTEPS.

He turns. **Zara** stands in the doorway. She's been watching. Quiet. Eyes narrowed.

ZARA

"You think pain justifies betrayal?"

JAKE flinches.

JAKE

"I didn't give them names. Just an opening. One night. That's it."

ZARA

"One night's all it takes to lose everything."

She walks away — no threats, no screams. Just truth.

JAKE sits in the dark, swallowed by guilt.

JAKE (V.O.)

(murmured prayer)

"Let it just be pain. Not blood."

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - LATER THAT NIGHT

A single Raider drone lifts off a rooftop — blinking red. Its destination: St. Gideon's.

INT. CATHEDRAL WAR ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Maps lit by candles. Wires trail across a board showing shifts, barricades, fallback points.

ZARA stands at the head of the table, surrounded by a handful of the core survivors — **Marcus**, **Horace**, and a watchful **Lenny**.

She doesn't yell. Doesn't accuse.

ZARA

(quiet, steady)

"We've been breached. Not by guns. Not by teeth. But by weakness."

She places a folded comm unit on the table. Everyone knows what it is.

HORACE

(grim)
Jake?

ZARA

He talked. One opening. Patrol schedule. Enough to plan a kill box.

MARCUS

(shaken)
Is he... gone?

ZARA

No. But he won't be on patrol. Not again.

MARCUS

You going to exile him?

ZARA

Not yet. But if a bullet finds its way into the wrong place tomorrow... I won't stop it.

A long silence. Then:

LENNY

(quietly)
He saved me once. Pulled me off a bus roof when I froze. Just—don't forget that part, too.

Zara locks eyes with Lenny. The line of her jaw softens slightly. Then hardens again.

ZARA

I won't forget. But I won't let sentiment kill us either.

She turns back to the table — points to a marked grid.

ZARA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Double patrols. Stagger watch on the South Alley. And from now on...

(beat)

ZARA (CONT'D)

No one walks the sanctuary alone.

They nod.

ZARA (CONT'D)

They want us divided. So we double
down on unity. Trust must be earned
— and defended.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY RUINS - EARLY MORNING

The cathedral sleeps. Fog clings low to the asphalt like
breath held too long.

INT. CATHEDRAL SIDE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

JAKE, pale and silent, slides the lock from the side chamber
door. He holds his breath as it clicks — no one stirs.
Bandaged, shivering, he slings on a jacket and eases the door
open.

EXT. CATHEDRAL PERIMETER - MOMENTS LATER

Jake slips into the ruins alone. No weapons. Just a bottle of
water and a faint limp.

The city greets him with stillness. Broken signs, gutted
storefronts, burnt-out cars. He walks, breathing heavily,
muttering something under his breath — prayer or guilt or
both.

JAKE (V.O.)

"Just pain. Just silence. That's
all I want."

Then—SCRATCH.

He freezes.

A low shuffle behind him. He spins.

Nothing.

He hurries on. Turns down a side street where fog thickens —
pooling like smoke.

POV SHOT - FROM WITHIN THE FOG

Watching. Waiting.

Jake stumbles against a fallen traffic light. His breath
ragged. He crouches, wheezing.

CRACK.

He looks up.

Silhouettes in the mist. Five. No-more.

ZOMBIES.

Echo variants. Eyes faintly glowing. They surround without sound.

JAKE (WEAK, HOARSE)
 "No-no-please—"

He turns to run.

Too slow.

A SNARL. A SCREAM.

They descend.

From a rooftop in the distance — a lone silhouette watches.

ZARA, eyes wide with horror, clutching a thermal scope. She doesn't shout. Doesn't cry.

She simply lowers the scope.

ZARA(V.O.)
 "Mercy never came fast in this world."

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - DAWN

The sky is bruised purple and rust-red as the first light crests the horizon. Fog rolls low across the street. Everything feels still — too still.

ZARA scans with binoculars. LENNY watches through his thermal rig.

LENNY
 "Heat signature... four o'clock. Slow movement. Not Raiders."

ZARA
 "Echoes?"

LENNY
 "Too spread out. Might be civvies."

ZARA

"Then they're bait. Or doomed."

Below — MARCUS and HORACE finish wiring fuel cells beneath the western barricade.

HORACE

"Trip line's live. Spark it, and we roast the front row."

MARCUS

"We'll baptize them in fire."

Suddenly — a WHISTLE. High, metallic.

ZARA

"Contact. West approach. Confirmed Raider pattern."

Distant ENGINES growl to life.

ZARA (INTO RADIO) (CONT'D)

"Positions. Now."

INT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL — WAR ROOM — MOMENTS LATER

The blueprint lies open. The *Lone Man's* diagrams glow faint in lantern light. Lenny's notes and wiring patterns overlay the original ink.

ARIA

"You trust this guy? Whoever left this?"

ZARA

"I know who left it. And I trust his aim more than Kael's."

MARCUS

"He's either prophet or shadow. But he sees the path."

They all nod. Steeled by silence.

EXT. ST. GIDEON'S PERIMETER — SUNRISE

KAEL's convoy arrives in a column of flame and noise. THE MAW rolls at the center, its engines growling deep.

Civilians chained to the siege ramp drag it forward. Their eyes hollow, their feet bloodied.

KAEL (THROUGH LOUDSPEAKER)
 "Final tithe. Surrender now. Or
 drown in your defiance."

COLE REDD is nowhere in sight.

RAIDERS cheer. They chant:

RAIDERS
 "BLOOD. FUEL. FIRE."

ZARA watches from the bell tower. Her jaw clenches.

ZARA (INTO RADIO)
 "Confirm ramp angle. They've got
 siege intent. Aria — see the left
 side clearing?"

ARIA (V.O.)
 "Got it. Charge planted. Waiting on
 your mark."

A tense pause.

ZARA
 "When they breach, we burn the road
 behind them."

INT. CATHEDRAL SANCTUARY - PRE-BATTLE

The group moves like clockwork — last checks, final prayers.
 Zara buckles her armor. Lenny arms the perimeter sensors.

MARCUS
 "This isn't just a siege. It's a
 crucible."

ZARA
 "Then let's come out tempered."

From above — a FLARE bursts. Red.

ZARA (INTO RADIO) (CONT'D)
 "They're here. Everyone, hold your
 breath. Then make 'em choke on it."

EXT. CATHEDRAL WALLS - MOMENTS LATER

The Raiders surge. The siege ramp screeches into position.
 Booby traps ignite — gouts of flame and concussive charges
 tear into the first wave.

ECHO ZOMBIES appear at the periphery – but don't join. They watch. Intelligent. Waiting.

INT. THE MAW – KAEEL'S POV

Kael watches multiple feeds. Calm. Ceremonial.

KAEEL (INTO RADIO)

"Release the cargo."

From a caged trailer behind The Maw – FERAL ZOMBIES are unleashed. Screaming, blood-maddened things.

Kael lights a cigar. Exhales.

KAEEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

"Let them pray. We'll answer."

INT. LONE MAN'S BUNKER – INTERCUT

The space is darker now. Most monitors off. EMP shielding blankets the walls. Shelves are stripped bare except for one final toolkit and a canister of fusion gel.

The Lone Man kneels before the city map – pins and thread lines converging.

He pulls a rolled blueprint from beneath the cot: labeled **"Signal Relay Tower – Emergency Uplink Variant"**.

One final plan. One final message.

He unfolds a folded cloth beside it: a patch bearing the symbol of Lazarus Tech. Under it: a picture of a girl and a worn dog tag.

LONE MAN

(quietly, to himself)

"One last sin. For her."

He marks two final Xs – one over the cathedral, the other over a disused power relay near the subway hub.

He loads up a cart rigged with a pulse beacon, EMP charges, and a flare gun.

LONE MAN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

"Let them come. I'll be louder."

He pushes open the bunker doors. Fog swallows him as he vanishes toward the front.

INT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - PRE-SIEGE STILLNESS - LATE MORNING

The cathedral is eerily quiet. Sunlight filters through the boarded windows, casting fractured beams over the pews. The storm hasn't hit yet — but everyone feels it coming.

INT. BELL TOWER PLATFORM

ZARA scans the distance through the scope of a salvaged sniper rifle. Her breath clouds the lens — she's been here for hours. She watches as Raider silhouettes shift behind makeshift barricades.

Behind her, **ARIA** climbs up silently.

ARIA

"Movement along the southern flank. They're repositioning fuel tanks."

ZARA

"Trying to herd us again. Or force a breach."

ARIA

"We still got the tunnel fallback?"

Zara nods faintly — then looks away.

ZARA

"Doesn't feel like running would save us this time."

INT. CRYPT ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

MARCUS kneels at the old shrine again. But this time, he isn't praying. He's loading shells into a double-barrel shotgun. The crucifix still hangs beside him.

He mutters:

MARCUS

"Redemption's too expensive. But revenge? That I can afford."

INT. CATHEDRAL ARMORY

LENNY has a motion sensor rig wired into an old fire alarm bell.

LENNY

"If anything crosses the north lawn, we'll hear it. Even if we're dead."

EXT. PERIMETER WALL - MOMENTS LATER

HORACE and **VEX** crouch beneath sandbagged slits. Vex lights a cigarette, flicking the lighter off the cracked concrete.

HORACE

"You always smoke before battle?"

VEX

"Only when I think it's my last one."

They share a quiet moment as a Raider flare arcs up in the distance.

HORACE

"Showtime."

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. OUTER CATHEDRAL WALLS - SIEGE SETUP - CONTINUOUS

RAIDERS pour into position like theater actors hitting their marks. **KAEEL** walks down a line of kneeling torchbearers. Each one lights their fuel-drenched torches in succession.

Above them, on a scaffold:

COLE REDD watches grimly — his face lit by fire.

Behind Kael, **THE MAW** revs ominously.

KAEEL

(barks)

"Let the bells toll! Let their sanctuary burn!"

He holds up the charred radio mic again.

KAEEL (INTO RADIO) (CONT'D)

"St. Gideon's — your tithe is due.
We'll take it in screams."

He drops the mic. The siege begins.

EXT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - DAWN'S EDGE

A RED FLARE — launched far across the district. Not from Raiders. From the old comm tower.

She radios down.

ZARA

"Lenny, flare at Grid 14-C. That's not Kael."

INT. CATHEDRAL TECH ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

LENNY adjusts the thermal scope overlay.

LENNY

"I see it. And... Jesus, I'm seeing a shortwave spike. Like a relay just booted up."

A signal pulses across the city grid. Faint. Measured. A countdown?

EXT. DERELICT POWER RELAY NODE - INTERCUT

THE LONE MAN crouches beside an ancient transformer box. Connects wires. Flicks a manual switch.

A DEEP, RESONANT PULSE travels underground — a shockwave the Raiders and Echoes feel.

INT. THE MAW - RAIDER WAR VEHICLE - SIMULTANEOUS

KAEL flinches.

KAEL

"What was that?"

COLE REDD looks up sharply. His eyes narrow.

COLE

"Not one of ours."

Kael snarls. Orders the Maw forward.

KAEL

"Push to the Cathedral. Double time. Bring the tower."

EXT. OUTER STREETS - SIMULTANEOUS

A cluster of ECHO ZOMBIES stop mid-march. Heads tilt. Pupils dilate.

One Echo kneels and presses its palm to the pavement.

Suddenly, they veer off-course. Splitting from the siege line. Migrating toward the old subway entrance.

INT. CATHEDRAL LOOKOUT POST - CONTINUOUS

ZARA stares at the siege line.

ZARA

"They're shifting. Echoes are splitting off... toward the subway."

She lowers the Sniper Scope. Realization dawning.

ZARA (CONT'D)

"The Lone Man. He pulled them. Bought us time."

INT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - WAR ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maps scatter. Signal trackers blink erratically. The survivors regroup, adrenaline palpable.

HORACE

(studying schematic)

"Their formation's breaking - Raiders still moving, but Echoes are peeling off."

LENNY

"Subway corridor. Junction near Zone 6. That's where the signal's pulling them."

ARIA

"Yeah, great, now we're just down to a psycho with a bone mask and a death truck."

MARCUS

"No. Kael without chaos is just noise. He'll get reckless."

ZARA
 (glancing between them)
 "Then we make it cost him."

She circles potential breach points on the map.

ZARA (CONT'D)

"Set explosives along the nave. Guard the bell tower. We collapse the flank if they get through the gate."

She looks to Lenny.

ZARA (CONT'D)
 "Patch into the tower rig. If you see Kael, you drop it on his head."

LENNY
 (grim)
 "With pleasure."

EXT. OUTER RUINS - SIMULTANEOUS

THE MAW barrels down a collapsed avenue. Raiders flank on foot and bike.

COLE REDD rides beside it — quiet. Watching. Thinking.

RAIDER SPOTTER
 (on comms)
 "Echoes breaking formation. Something's wrong."

KAEL
 "Echoes aren't our war. The Cathedral is. Full throttle!"

COLE
 (quietly)
 "Wrong war, Kael..."

He slows — falling back from the lead.

INT. SEWER TUNNEL CHOKEPOINT - INTERCUT

RAYNE FOX and NYLA DRAKE watch as dozens of Echoes pass them by — silent, focused, almost reverent.

RAYNE FOX
 (softly)
 "They're not chasing."
 (MORE)

RAYNE FOX (CONT'D)
They're drawn. Like they know
something's waiting."

NYLA DRAKE
"We follow?"

RAYNE FOX
"No. We find the Lone Man. If he's
guiding them, he's part of the
answer."

INT. CATHEDRAL CRYPT - SAME TIME

Marcus kneels beside a cache of fuel canisters and prayers
scrawled on old hymn sheets.

He places a crucifix on the ground. Lights a single match.

MARCUS
"You'll see us through. Or I'll
light the gates to heaven myself."

INT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - WAR ROOM - IMMEDIATELY AFTER

A tangle of hand-drawn maps, aerial photos, and motion-sensor
feeds covers the communion table. Candlelight flickers. The
team moves fast — no wasted motion.

ZARA
(pacing)
"Echoes are gone. But that doesn't
stop Kael. It makes him desperate."

HORACE
(nods)
"Desperate breaks easier. We crack
the ramp, burn the fuel, and let
him choke on the fire."

MARCUS
"Blood for blood. They've made this
sacred ground their target."

LENNY
(pointing at a display)
"Look here — thermal clusters
around the north barricade. Not
Echoes. Raiders. They're
positioning fast."

ZARA

"Tripwires in the cloisters.
Flamethrower pipe by the pulpit
arch. And Lenny—trigger the tower
decoys the moment their first shot
lands."

LENNY

(focused)

"Already tuned to broadcast Kael's
voice back at them. Doubled reverb.
Make him his own nightmare."

EXT. CITY BLOCK OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

THE MAW grinds forward. Kael rides atop it, body painted in
ash and bone.

KAEEL

"Tower first. Then we bleed them
dry."

RAIDER TROOPS drag a **RAMMING CHASSIS** forward — industrial,
rusted, shaped like a battering ram engine block on treads.

COLE REDD watches from a distance. He slips a hand beneath
his coat... revealing a folded **photo** of a woman and child. His
jaw clenches.

INT. CATHEDRAL - BELL TOWER - MOMENTS LATER

Lenny adjusts an old speaker coil. A red diode glows.

He looks to a small **scrap-metal figurine** beside him — a girl
made from copper wire and bolts. His sister's.

LENNY

(softly)

"Stay quiet. I'll do the loud
part."

He flips a switch. A pulse signal hums through the air.

EXT. CATHEDRAL WALLS - CONTINUOUS

BOOM! A RAIDER FLARE EXPLODES overhead.

Zara ducks behind the battlements. Marcus stands behind her,
shotgun braced.

ZARA

(quietly)

"Hold."

Raiders scream down the boulevard. Bikes rev. Spikes gleam.

MARCUS

"They always come loudest before
they break."

ZARA

"Let's make sure they don't get a
second chance."

EXT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - THE FIRST BREACH

BOOM! A section of the eastern barricade erupts in fire and splinters.

The RAIDER RAMMING CHASSIS rumbles through smoke and debris, its drill-head spinning. Raiders pour in behind it — shouting, painted, wild.

INT. CATHEDRAL NAVE - SAME TIME

ZARA, covered in soot, shouts over the explosion.

ZARA

"North entrance breached! Lenny—
drop the cloister net!"

INT. SIDE HALLWAY - LENNY'S POV

LENNY slams a breaker.

EXT. CATHEDRAL SIDE CLOISTER - CONTINUOUS

Flamethrower pipes BLAST to life, sheets of fire scalding the first wave of Raiders. Screams. Two go down in a tangle of spikes and fire.

INT. BELL TOWER - MOMENTS LATER

The reverb signal triggers — Kael's own voice, distorted and demonic, echoes over loudspeakers.

KAEL'S VOICE (V.O.)

"Burn the prayer. Salt the blood.
Feed the flame."

The Raiders **freeze**, unnerved. Even Kael looks up.

EXT. PERIMETER - INTERCUT

Several ECHO ZOMBIES — standing still on the outskirts — turn toward the cathedral as if hearing a distant whisper.

They do not charge. They begin to **walk backward, retreating into alleys.**

INT. TACTICAL OVERWATCH - SAME TIME

CAMILA, watching from a corner with a neuro-sensor feed, stares at brainwave spikes on her monitor.

CAMILA

(whispering)

"They're syncing to the sound...
but not attacking. It's like—
resonance."

INT. SEWER TUNNELS - INTERCUT

THE LONE MAN — covered in blood, one arm wounded — stares at his last functioning transmitter.

He slams his palm down. Another **pulse signal** goes out.

LONE MAN

"Time to listen."

INT. ECHO HUD - SUBTERRANEAN MONITOR FEED (VFX SHOT)

A POV from a rogue Lazarus interface. HUD flickers. Targets marked as HOSTILE suddenly shift to NEUTRAL.

EXT. CITY BLOCK - SAME TIME

A group of ECHO ZOMBIES **pivot**. One drops its bone blade. Another stares skyward, twitching.

INTERCUT SUBPLOT - EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

ARIA crouches beside a scoped rifle, scanning through smoke.

Down below: a RAIDER heavy trooper corners two trapped survivors.

COLE REDD steps into view. Gun raised – then slowly lowers it.

The Raider looks at him, confused.

COLE
"Walk away."

The Raider doesn't. Aria fires – clean shot. Drops him.

Cole looks up at Aria. They lock eyes. He nods.

She doesn't shoot him.

BACK TO:

EXT. CATHEDRAL NAVE – CONTINUOUS

The Raiders regroup, confused. Some backing off.

KAEL
(roaring)
"Don't hesitate! Don't think! They
bleed like anyone else!"

He charges the gate alone – shotgun raised.

ZARA
"Now!"

HORACE ignites the final tripline.

KRA-KOOM! A massive arc of fire and shrapnel tears across the ramp.

Kael is **engulfed** in smoke and flame.

INT. CATHEDRAL WAR ROOM – SIMULTANEOUS

CAMILA watches the Echoes fade from radar. One last spike.

CAMILA
"They're not gone. They're
changing."

ZARA (O.S.)
"Then so do we."

INT./EXT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - THE SIEGE BEGINS

EXT. EASTERN WALL - DAWN

KAEL'S RAMMING CHASSIS SMASHES INTO THE WALL — once, twice.
Metal screeches, masonry buckles.

ZARA (O.S.)

"Brace the archway!"

INT. NAVE - CONTINUOUS

ZARA and HORACE sprint down the center aisle, dragging a salvaged car hood and broken pew legs into place.

HORACE

"They're coming through!"

INT. LOOKOUT POST - MOMENTS LATER

LENNY rewinds heatmap footage. The ECHO ZOMBIES are forming lines beyond the Raiders.

LENNY

"They're not fighting. They're
watching. Kael doesn't know."

He triggers a beacon on the cathedral rooftop — a signal flare burns blue.

EXT. MAW RIDGE - SAME TIME

KAEL

(spits blood)

"They think light scares us? Burn
brighter."

He motions to his gunners — they open fire.

INT. SANCTUARY - SIMULTANEOUS

Shrapnel rains through stained glass. Marcus covers two civilians with his coat.

MARCUS

"No death today. No one dies in
this house."

INT. ARMORY CHAMBER

ZARA opens a steel cabinet — handmade crossbows, pipe bombs, old riot shields.

ZARA

"We hold this place, or we bury it with us."

INT. BUNKER - SIMULTANEOUS

The LONE MAN is half-conscious, bleeding badly. He speaks into a mic rigged to a hacked Lazarus broadcast node.

LONE MAN

"If you're hearing this... you survived the first lie. Don't survive the second."

He uploads a virus: code scrolls, a neural disruption pattern meant to hijack Echo waveforms.

EXT. STREETS - VARIOUS

Echoes STOP. Some tremble. Others fall to their knees. One turns — and attacks a Raider.

INT. CATHEDRAL ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

LENNY watches the chaos unfold.

LENNY

"He did it. He turned them."

ZARA (O.S.)

"Then we fight with ghosts now."

EXT. CATHEDRAL WALL - FINAL MOMENT OF THE SCENE

Kael screams as Echoes begin to descend on his flank.

KAEI

"This city is MINE!"

ZARA (V.O.)

"Not anymore."

EXT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - THE BREACH BEGINS

The cathedral shakes from a violent IMPACT. A ramming engine SLAMS the northern wall. Dust rains from above.

ZARA (O.S.)
"Positions! Hold the east line!"

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE

HORACE lights the first fuel cell rig. A controlled BLAST tears through Raider ranks.

HORACE
"That's one for the choir."

INT. NAVE BALCONY

LENNY shouts into a walkie as he activates pulsing sound traps. Echo zombies in the distance momentarily stall, heads twitching.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MAW - SAME TIME

KAEL hears his own voice distorted and booming from the cathedral speakers.

KAEL
(snaps)
"Find that feed. Rip it out!"

COLE REDD hesitates — then quietly reroutes fuel from The Maw's tank.

CUT TO:

INT. CATHEDRAL UNDERCROFT

Zombies pour from an access tunnel — drawn by sound. Aria, bloodied, fires flare rounds.

ARIA
"You want in? Try us!"

A Raider grapples with an Echo — and is torn apart. Confusion spreads.

ZARA (V.O.)
 "They're turning on each other..."

EXT. BELL TOWER

LONE MAN appears from the fog. He drops a satchel at the base
 — then disappears again.

INT. BELL TOWER - MOMENTS LATER

LENNY finds it. Blueprints. Signal keys. Final message:

LONE MAN (V.O.)
 "This isn't defense. It's
 revelation."

EXPLOSION — a side wall ruptures. SCENE ENDS IN FIRE AND ASH.

INT. CATHEDRAL SANCTUARY - NIGHT

Smoke and flame twist through the vaulted ceiling. ZARA leads
 a retreating crew — HORACE, LENNY, ARIA — deeper into the
 nave, under persistent fire from RAIDERS.

ZARA
 "Fall back to the inner pillars!
 Break their sightlines!"

A Raider crashes through stained glass — an ECHO ZOMBIE
 follows right behind and rips into him.

The survivors stop. Stare.

HORACE
 "...they're fighting each other?"

INT. THE MAW - KAEEL'S POV - SAME TIME

KAEEL, seething, watches Echoes maul his front line.

KAEEL
 "Why aren't they attacking the
 meat?"

COLE REDD
 "...maybe they're choosing."

Kael turns. Cole's shotgun is up.

KAEEL
"You're not that man."

COLE
"But I'm not yours either."

BOOM. Kael falls. Cole exits The Maw — unarmed — into the storm of chaos.

EXT. CATHEDRAL COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Fire dances across the lawn. Raiders scatter as a low-frequency pulse emits from the bell tower — Lenny's system, finally activated.

Echoes stop. One by one. Then pivot — not toward the survivors, but away.

ARIA
(breathing hard)
"They're retreating..."

ZARA
"No. They're regrouping."

Across the yard, one Echo holds a Raider's severed arm. Then drops it and runs.

INT. WAR ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

MARCUS watches signal lines blink out on the map. One node remains — deep beneath the city.

MARCUS
(whispers)
"They're going home."

EXT. CATHEDRAL WALLS - INTERCUT

Hunter survivors take positions beside lone resistance fighters. United.

A drone flies overhead — from VEX. A second detonation rips through the Raider fallback line.

ARIA
(over comms)
"Signal reached east side. Tower is holding."

INT. CATHEDRAL NAVE - LATER

Bodies — Raider and Echo — litter the ground.

ZARA, burned and shaking, checks on LENNY, who's unconscious near the signal core.

MARCUS kneels in blood, still praying. Then stops.

MARCUS
(quietly, finally)
"They were never ours to save. Just
witness."

A new sound filters in: the wind. Silence. No screams. No warcries.

Just the distant echo of footsteps receding.

INT. CATHEDRAL INFIRMARY - EARLY MORNING

Dim light filters through tarp-covered windows. The once-holy space now reeks of blood, antiseptic, and smoke.

ZARA sits beside LENNY, who lies unconscious on a makeshift cot. His shoulder is bandaged, wires from the signal core still tangled around his wrist.

ZARA
(quietly)
"You bought us time, kid. Don't you
dare sleep through it."

She adjusts his blanket.

LENNY
(gruffly)
"How many did we lose?"

ZARA
"Five. Maybe more. Aria's squad is
still sweeping east hall."

LENNY
(shakes head)
"Freaks picked through us like we
were their training ground."

ZARA
"No... that was a test. And we just
passed."

EXT. CITY SKYLINE - SUNRISE

Smoke still rises from the cathedral grounds. The city is eerily silent.

Across the rooftops, lone figures begin to appear — survivors drawn by the broadcast signal. Some wave flags. Others carry improvised weapons.

The war has shifted.

INT. CATHEDRAL BELL TOWER - SAME TIME

MARCUS climbs the final rungs. Reaches the highest point.

He looks out over the broken city.

MARCUS

(to himself)

"The first resurrection failed.
Maybe this is the second."

He plants a salvaged flagpole — St. Gideon's cross made from welded rebar and fractured glass. It catches the wind.

INT. ST. GIDEON'S CATHEDRAL - EARLY MORNING

Ash floats through shafts of gray light pouring through the broken dome. The cathedral is wounded — scorched stone, collapsed pews, blood pooled in the grout. Yet... quiet.

ZARA walks the nave in silence, surveying the damage. Her steps echo. She picks up a Raider helmet, cracked and bloodied. Tosses it aside.

INT. SIDE CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

MARCUS wraps LENNY's shoulder. LENNY winces awake.

LENNY

(hoarse)

"Did we win?"

MARCUS

"We're still here. That's enough."

LENNY closes his eyes. He's shaking slightly — fever, adrenaline, maybe both.

INT. CATHEDRAL VESTIBULE - SAME TIME

COLE REDD stands alone, staring at his reflection in a broken stained-glass shard. Blood on his hands. His shotgun leans against the wall.

ZARA approaches.

ZARA

"Why'd you do it?"

COLE

"Because someone had to. Kael didn't start a war. He was just a symptom."

She studies him. Not trusting — not yet. But something changed.

ZARA

"Then let's hope you're not one too."

INT. CATHEDRAL TOWER - DAYBREAK

ARIA scans the city through a long-range scope. The skyline remains still. But just barely.

In the distance — silhouettes of ECHO ZOMBIES moving in patterns. Not retreating. Circling something.

She lowers the scope.

ARIA

(to comms)

"They're not gone. They're hunting something else now."

INTERCUT SUBPLOT - INT. LONE MAN'S BUNKER - SIMULTANEOUS

LONE MAN finishes drawing a spiral pattern on the map. Every movement. Every shift. One central convergence point.

LONE MAN

(softly)

"Time to follow the current to its mouth."

He opens a hidden weapons crate. Inside: a folded subway map, marked in red. Beside it — a breathing mask and flare rounds.

He loads a shell into a shotgun and dons a rebreather. The camera lingers as he shuts down all lights in the bunker.

Darkness swallows him.

BACK TO:

INT. CATHEDRAL - LATER

The air is thick with smoke and silence. The pews are shattered. Iconography blackened by fire. Sunlight filters in through the broken stained glass – colorless now.

Survivors move like ghosts. They sweep blood. Burn the corpses of both Echoes and Raiders in a mass pyre beyond the gate. The barricades are re-welded, scarred but standing.

MARCUS, voice roughened by smoke and resolve, speaks into a busted PA mic. His sermon is quieter than before – less fire, more bone.

MARCUS

"We have endured. Not by power. Not by miracle.
But by memory.
By the things we won't let the dark take from us."

ZARA, covered in ash and blood, looks up from a heap of charred armor plating. She stares at Marcus – not in awe, but with quiet measure.

ZARA

(firmly)
"Then let's make damn sure they remember this place too."

She turns. Picks up a sledgehammer. Begins re-inscribing the front doors in steel. A new symbol. Not of religion. Of resistance.

CAMILA silently adds her own mark. A swirl. The same spiral the Echoes left – broken at its center.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NEAR ABANDONED SUBWAY - DAY

The city is dead quiet. The wind carries ash like slow snowfall.

THE LONE MAN walks alone, **SALVATION** parked nearby, silent sentinel.

He descends a rusted staircase into the **subway tunnels**, carrying a flashlight and a folded, heavily annotated map. His boots echo off wet tile.

Walls are covered in old Lazarus graffiti, smeared bloody spirals. Broken cameras dangle from the ceiling like dead eyes.

LONE MAN

(low, to himself)

"Always starts beneath."

He reaches a gate — torn open. Beyond it, shadows shift. Something **breathes**. Wet. Massive.

Shapes appear in the distance. Not just zombies — but something older. Rooted. Twitching.

Flesh embedded in wall. Bone lattices. Things that were human once... and something else entirely.

A glint of metal.

The remains of Lazarus tech, fused into the floor — still powered, humming low.

The Lone Man steps forward, drawing his weapon.

He lights a flare — and for one second, the tunnel comes alive with **movement**.

Not one shape. Dozens. **Hive-motion**. Soundless.

The flare drops.

BLACKNESS SWALLOWS THE FRAME.

INT. CATHEDRAL ROOFTOP — NIGHT

ZARA stands watch under a ruined bell tower, torchlight flickering behind her.

Below, children play silently in the barricaded courtyard. For now, it's safe.

She looks to the horizon. Smoke still rises. Echoes still cry.

ZARA (V.O.)

"They said we couldn't build
anything in the ashes.
They were right.

(MORE)

ZARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We didn't build. We bled it into
being."

SMASH TO BLACK.

TITLE: REVENANT CITY

CREDITS BEGIN.

FADE TO BLACK.

POST-CREDIT SCENE

EXT. UNKNOWN HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A vast darkness. Silent. Until—
RUMBLE. Low. Distant. Growing.

A HEADLIGHT BEAM PIERCES THE NIGHT.

From the ash-choked void, **SALVATION** emerges —

Its armor scorched. Blood-streaked. Reinforced with new,
foreign tech.

Its **headlights glow red**, humming with latent power.

INT. SALVATION - CABIN

The **LONE MAN** drives. Quiet. Focused.

On the dash — no HUD. Instead:

A LAZARUS INTERFACE crackles to life.

Boot sequence stutters to activation:

--REINTEGRATION PHASE: INITIALIZING --NEURAL SIGNALS:
EXTERNAL... DETECTED --ECHO PATTERN RECOGNIZED :: VARIANT-
OMEGA

He tightens his grip.

In the **rearview mirror**, his eyes flicker—**not red... but silver.**

A rhythmic **THUMPING** begins.

Echoes' knock language. Faint. Mechanical. Growing louder.

He slams the accelerator.

SALVATION ROARS into the black.

EXT. RUINED CHECKPOINT - LATER

SALVATION idles at the edge of a collapsed freeway. Dust curling in the dark.

Inside the cab:

The **Lone Man** adjusts a cracked **frequency dial**.

STATIC... STATIC...

Then:

ZARA (V.O.)

"This is Zara, broadcasting from
St. Gideon's.
If you're hearing this, you're not
alone."

The Lone Man stares ahead.

ZARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"We held the line. We lost people.
But we're still here.
And we're not done."

Far ahead:

A signal tower flickers through the dust.

ZARA (V.O.) (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

"If you're not one of them yet...
Then start fighting like one of
us."

He lowers a **burned photo** of a girl onto the seat next to him.

Flips the ignition switch.

LONE MAN

(quiet)
"Copy."

EXT. DESERTED HIGHWAY - NIGHT

SALVATION launches forward — into smoke, into silence, into war.

FADE TO BLACK.

TEXT OVER:

**REVENANT CITY WILL RETURN
— IN "REVENANT: DOMINION"**